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THE EVIDENCE FOR THE SUPERNATURAL

It fortifies my soul to know
That, though I perish, Truth is so;
That, howsoe'er I stray and range,
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.
I steadier step, when I recall
That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.

CLOUGH.

THE EVIDENCE FOR THE SUPERNATURAL

A CRITICAL STUDY MADE WITH "UNCOMMON SENSE"

67476

BY

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Dedication

TO
ALL THOSE, IN THE PAST AND PRESENT,
WHOSE GENIUS, INDUSTRY, UNFLINCHING
LOVE OF TRUTH, ENCOURAGEMENT
OR ASSISTANCE, HAVE MADE
THE WRITING OF THIS
BOOK POSSIBLE

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PREFACE

I FEEL that the sub-title of this book will lay me open to a well-merited charge of egoism—if of nothing worse—unless I can justify my use of the expression "uncommon sense." Therefore a foreword explaining the circumstances under which the book came to be written seems necessary.

In the autumn of 1907 there appeared in the *Westminster Gazette* a series of articles under the title of "Occultism and Common Sense," in which the writer, Mr. Beckles Willson, undertook, without much pretence to any special qualification for the task, a review of psychical research up to date in order to settle the question whether the mid-Victorian attitude of scepticism towards spiritualism, entertained by such great men as Faraday, Tyndall, Huxley and Spencer, could still be maintained, and he came to the conclusion that in the face of recent evidence such an attitude was unjustifiable. Having read these articles just before sailing for New Zealand, I had much time on the voyage to think over the matter, and I very much doubted whether the great men mentioned would have found any reason in the recent evidence quoted by Mr. Willson for changing their opinion. However, I decided to investigate the matter myself, and accordingly, in the ensuing year that I spent in New Zealand, I filled up spare time by reading with a view to making up my mind on the subject. Then, in the attempt to estimate the value of the evidence for Spiritualism, I was inevitably led to a consideration of all that is popularly included in the word "supernatural."

In the following pages I do not profess to have written much that can be described, even vaguely, as original, seeing that it is largely a reproduction of ideas much

better expressed by philosophers like Herbert Spencer and G. H. Lewes, by experts in natural science like Tyndall and Huxley, by a student of psychical phenomena like Mr. Frank Podmore. However, their writings are of considerable length, and not much read by the man-in-the-street; therefore I hope that, by combining in one short book the results at which I have arrived with their help, I may succeed in interesting those who have not much time for reading, and yet are anxious to form for themselves a sound opinion as to the truth in these important matters. In fact, such a book as this seems to me particularly needed at the present time, when writers like Thomson Jay Hudson turn out popular psychic treatises such as "The Law of Psychic Phenomena," "A Scientific Demonstration of the Future Life," and "The Divine Pedigree of Man," in which it is assumed that telepathy is a force in nature as well established as the Force of Gravity. At the same time, I realise that I am in danger of "falling between two stools," namely, on the one hand, of giving too philosophical an expression to what is meant to be a popular book, and, on the other hand, of being too superficial for more scientific readers in my treatment of questions so complex that their solution becomes in one sense more difficult the more knowledge grows. This difficulty, however, can hardly be avoided, and arises from the same cause as that which has induced me to call this inquiry a critical study made with "uncommon sense." For common-sense is not by itself an adequate protection against the fallacies which abound in complex philosophical questions; and that this is so is clearly proved by the titles given to their books by those writers on Spiritualism who have no special qualification for the task, like the author of "Occultism and Common-Sense," whom even Sir Oliver Lodge felt justified in calling "an irresponsible journalist." A most excellent illustration of this tendency is given by Podmore in the chapter on table-turning in his "Modern Spiritualism" as follows:—"The point of view of the average muddle-headed man is amusingly illustrated

in an anonymous pamphlet published in the autumn of this year (1853), entitled 'Table-turning and Table-talking considered in connection with the dictates of Reason and Common-Sense.' The writer finds himself constrained to record his dissent from Faraday's explanation. 'It is not,' he contends, 'with learned theories we wish to have to do . . . we would simply bring common-sense to bear on these strange matters.' He then proceeds to point out—to Faraday—that 'there is a subtle matter which pervades all nature,' known in some of its manifestations as electricity. It is true we know very little about it; but for all that, or perhaps because of that, it seems to the writer not unreasonable to suggest that electricity makes the table move. A more apt illustration of the arrogance of sheer ignorance on which Faraday had animadverted, could hardly be found.'" (Vol. ii., p. 10.) And Podmore has written in the same book another passage on the uselessness of untrained common-sense, which is worth quoting:—"The unity of substance and the omnipotence of electricity—'salvation by electricity,' as James happily terms it—were the two keys which for the early Spiritualist unlocked the doors of all knowledge in heaven or on earth. Of the nature of God, or other transcendental mysteries, the spirits have nothing to say. The world they present to our view is a strictly material world, developing by processes of material evolution towards an unknown end. There is no mystery about their teaching. Spirit is only attenuated matter, the other world a counterpart of this; the living universe an endless series of beings like ourselves. Their view in short represents the product of common-sense, the common-sense of the ordinary uninstructed man, acting upon the facts, or rather his interpretation of the facts, presented to him. Given his interpretation as correct, the inferences which he drew, the cosmological scheme which he constructed on the lines of his own parochial experience, follow inevitably. There is rarely any hint of deeper insight. The problems of Space and Time, of Knowing and Being, of Evil and

Good, of Will and Law, are hardly even recognised. Common-sense is not competent for these questions; and in so far as the Spiritualist scheme fails to take account of them, it falls short of being a Theology, or even an adequate Cosmology." (Vol. i., p. 302.)

A few words also are necessary in defence of the main title of this book, as I foresee that "The Evidence for the Supernatural" is an expression which will lend itself readily to adverse criticism. For I have noticed a tendency in recent years, both among spiritualists and ecclesiastics, to find satisfaction in the saying that the supernatural (or supernormal) of one generation is the natural (or normal) of the next. Thus Professor Barrett, F.R.S., in a lecture I heard him give at Letchworth in August, 1910, said—after stating his belief that a residue of psychic phenomena are most readily explicable by the hypothesis of discarnate spirits—that God alone is supernatural, and that all other explanations of phenomena are supernormal rather than supernatural.

To a certain extent this of course is true. To Australian aborigines or African forest dwellers the workings of wireless telegraphy, of photography, and of almost any branch of applied science, must appear on their first introduction inexplicable by any natural or known cause, and therefore supernormal (or supernatural). But if an uncivilised man, in trying to explain the phenomena of photography to his friends in the light of his own knowledge, said that it was due to a spirit which lived in a box possessed by the white men, and that the white men had merely to place this box in the neighbourhood of any object for the spirit of that object to fly to the spirit in the box, where it left an imprint on a piece of glass; though this description of the facts might be said to contain an element of truth, yet the explanation of the facts would not appear satisfactory to succeeding and more enlightened generations. Also such an explanation of photography would be based on errors of observation; for it leaves out of account the position of the camera in

relation to the sun, the chemicals on the photographic plate, etc., and the fact that a " cap " was removed from the lens in the process of taking a photograph. Thus a great distinction must be made between the truth contained in a set of recorded facts and the explanation of such so-called facts. Spiritualistic and ecclesiastical authorities are apt to confuse the issue when they quote the saying " the supernatural of one generation is the natural of the next " in support of their own position. For what they are fighting for is not so much the truth of the so-called facts themselves as their explanations of these facts. And whereas belief in the former may be strengthened with the additions to knowledge which every generation of scientific work is sure to make, belief in the latter is more often than not weakened. And if their explanations run counter to the accumulated experience of mankind, known as natural laws, belief will certainly be weakened—as for instance belief in that explanation of the floating of Elisha's axe, which requires a suspension of the Law of Gravity, or belief in those explanations of the " Temptation," that imply a contravention of the Laws of the Permanence of Matter and the Conservation of Energy. In this sense the word " supernatural " has a very definite meaning, and connotes invoking the aid of hypothetical forces to explain phenomena which are not apparently in harmony with so-called natural laws.

Huxley was very clear in his attitude towards the supernatural, and should command universal respect, as, while using words on which the above-quoted saying might be based, he did not mince matters about the necessity of sifting evidence and rejecting whatever might with probability be attributed to the mythopoeic faculty in man. Thus he wrote :—" In singular contrast with natural knowledge, again, the acquaintance of mankind with the supernatural appears the more extensive and the more exact, and the influence of supernatural doctrines upon conduct the greater the further back we go in time, and the lower the stage of civilisation submitted to investiga-

tion. Historically there would seem to be an inverse ratio between supernatural and natural knowledge. As the latter has widened, gained in precision and trustworthiness, so has the former shrunk, grown vague and questionable; as the one has more and more filled the sphere of action, so has the other retreated into the region of meditation, or vanished behind the screen of mere verbal recognition." (Prologue to "Controverted Questions," v., pp. 6, 7.) And again: "It is important to note that the principle of the scientific Naturalism of the latter half of the nineteenth century, in which the intellectual movement of the Renascence has culminated, and which was first clearly formulated by Descartes, leads not to the denial of the existence of any Supernature, but simply to the denial of the validity of the evidence adduced in favour of this or that extant form of Supernaturalism. I employ the words 'Supernature' and 'Supernatural' in their popular senses. For myself, I am bound to say that the term 'Nature' covers the totality of that which is. The world of psychical phenomena appears to me to be as much part of 'Nature' as the world of physical phenomena; and I am unable to perceive any justification for cutting the universe into two halves, one natural and one supernatural." ("Essays," vol. v., p. 39.) Employing the word "Supernatural" in the same sense as Huxley, I maintain, then, that there is plenty of justification for its use, especially as I notice that, though the phraseology of Naturalism may be partially adopted by those engaged in Biblical and psychical research, their influence often tends to foster the spread of supernatural ideas; and this is not surprising, when a certain number of well-known scientific men have vouched for the physical phenomena of Spiritualism. *The Evidence for the Supernatural* is therefore still a subject of considerable importance in the present day; and I consequently hope that this book will appeal to a variety of readers, not only among the clergy and general public, but among rationalists also, if their attitude is rightly reflected

by the author of "The Churches and Modern Thought," when he writes: "The phenomena Professor Lombroso refers to are those which have induced such eminent scientists as Wallace, Lodge, Hyslop, Barrett and Crookes to remain or to become supernaturalists. One, and to my mind the chief, reason why these metaphysical phenomena are, as Professor Lombroso tells us, of colossal importance—why science should direct attention towards them without delay—is that, so soon as they are universally acknowledged to be manifestations occurring in obedience to one of Nature's laws—a law as yet not fully understood—the last excuse for belief in the supernatural will have vanished. Supernaturalism will receive its death-blow, and Rationalism be infused with fresh life." (p. 396).

In my review of the evidence for the supernatural, I have omitted all reference to witchcraft, because this has now ceased to be a living question, largely owing to the brilliant first chapter of Lecky's "The History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe." As Lecky clearly shews there, belief in witchcraft has died, not so much from the cogency of the arguments used by any particular writer, as from its being contrary to the intellectual tendencies or mental atmosphere of the present century. Similarly, I have little expectation of convincing by my arguments those whose beliefs were formed irrevocably in childhood; but I hope that I may succeed in so influencing the mental atmosphere of the present day that future generations may find it easier to discover and hold to whatever is true in the sphere of the so-called supernatural, and that superstitions such as belief in witchcraft may increasingly be relegated to the past.

Another criticism which I anticipate, and the last which I propose to touch on here, is that one who does not belong to the Society for Psychical Research, or, at any rate, is not engaged in psychical research, cannot adequately estimate the value of evidence for the existence of mediumistic or psychic powers. To such I am inclined

to reply, that, as attending séances appears to have the effect of making some men more sceptical and others more credulous, and as the psychological atmosphere of a séance is by no means conducive to a coldly critical attitude, I believe that a calm unbiassed opinion is more easily formed in this particular type of research by studying the records of séances made by others with all reasonable care, and checked by every possible device. The late Mr. Frank Podmore had a special gift for research of this sort, and I take this opportunity of expressing my great indebtedness to his works.

As no human being is absolutely free from bias, I know that this book must suffer to some extent from this weakness; but I have tried throughout to take an impartial view of the evidence, and only to give way to that form of bias which arises from fear of being misled by inadequate or unreliable data. In spite of this, I fear, I may perhaps have shown an unjustifiable partiality towards belief in the supernatural, as I was brought up in strict Quaker principles and taught that the lives of George Fox and other saints, like St. Francis of Assisi, constituted practical examples of divine guidance.

For some of my illustrations I have gone to the Tongan Islands and New Zealand, as I was in that part of the world when this book was commenced, and other illustrations I have taken from "Occultism and Common-Sense"; but since my return to England, volumes of the "Proceedings of the S.P.R." have been accessible to me, and I have availed myself of their contents.

I should like to state here what a valuable work has been done, in my opinion, by the Society for Psychical Research, inasmuch as it has brought together and sifted the evidence for the occult, so that it is now possible to examine the evidence at its strongest. Previously, psychic phenomena constituted a vague and floating mass of material with which it was impossible to deal as a whole, and, as soon as one claim was shown to have no reliable basis, another cropped up in its place. In saying this, however, I do not wish to imply that I think

the S.P.R. has always done the sifting work well; for too many of its most active members have had no training in experimental psychology fitting them for their task, and have been the victims of pronounced bias, as sometimes they themselves have admitted, so that—in the words of Mr. Taylor Innes ("Where are the Letters?" *Nineteenth Century*, vol. xxii., p. 189)—"we can scarcely move towards our conclusions without broadly asserting that on this side the Society of Psychical Research has shown a great laxity in testing its evidence."

Next, I must record my thanks to Messrs. Methuen & Co., T. Fisher Unwin, and Macmillan & Co., for giving me permission to quote a large number of passages from *Modern Spiritualism*, *The Newer Spiritualism*, and *Huxley's Essays*, respectively; and I am grateful to the proprietors of *The Times* for their courtesy in allowing me to reproduce in the appendices the "Case of Dr. Astley," and other matter which had appeared in that journal. I am also indebted to Mr. Jarvis (and to the gentlemen acting with him in the matter of the £1000 challenge) for allowing me to inspect the documents in the "Case of Mr. and Mrs. Ames."

Lastly, the mention of these two "cases" reminds me to draw the attention of the reader to the fact that I have put in the appendices a large amount of valuable matter, which was either too long for insertion in a note or required fuller discussion than seemed desirable in the text itself. In particular, I found it necessary to do this in treating of the difficult question of telepathy, including the mediumship of Mrs. Piper; and so I hope that, should I succeed in interesting my readers, they will not neglect the appendices.

OCTOBER, 1911.

TRUTH

"Truth is the correspondence between the order of ideas and the order of phenomena, so that the one is a reflection of the other—the movement of Thought following the movement of Things." (G. H. Lewes, *Prolegomena*, § 12.)

"If truth is the correspondence between the order of ideas and the order of phenomena, the only right Method must be that which step by step assures the correspondence, demonstrating that the order of our ideas is also that of the phenomena they represent." (G. H. Lewes, *Prolegomena*, § 20.)

CHAPTER I

What is Truth?

If I were attempting more than a popular treatment of a very difficult subject, it would be necessary to consider at length the nature of truth and its test, and to discuss how far reality may be said to attach to all our conscious impressions of sense, and to what extent there is correspondence between the order of our ideas and the order of phenomena. But important as it is to realise how a knowledge of the universe and of self is built up in the human mind, I do not think it necessary for my purpose to do more than refer my readers to one of the many excellent text-books of Psychology, where these difficult subjects—such as the growth of ideas of time and space—are treated much more ably than I could handle them myself.[1] My purpose being rather to write from the point of view of the man-in-the-street, I shall start with the assumption that the ordinarily accepted facts of life are true—such as that we exist, that the impressions we get through our senses correspond to qualities of real objects outside us—and I shall also assume as true the so-called laws of nature, *e.g.*, Gravitation, Chemical Affinity, etc.[2] But although I start with these assumptions, and omit discussing the theoretical nature of a

[1] In particular, I would recommend for perusal William James' "Principles of Psychology," Herbert Spencer's "First Principles," and the introduction to G. H. Lewes' "History of Philosophy."

[2] Natural laws are based on the accumulated experience of mankind, which includes all knowledge gained through the bodily senses, since 'intuitive necessary truths' have been shown to have no existence apart from experience. (*See* G. H. Lewes, *Prolegomena*, §§ 66-69.)

" true proposition," yet it is necessary to consider what should be our practical standard of truth ; and in trying to give a rational answer to the question, " What is Truth ? " I shall hope to gain the sympathetic interest of those readers who, like Pilate, realise that a summary solution of this question is far from easy.

I am convinced that most people are quite unaware—at any rate consciously—what is the basis of their standard of truth ; so I shall first of all examine a statement about some natural phenomenon which is unanimously believed to be true, and try to discover the practical basis of that belief. The statement in question, which I feel I can confidently make without fear of contradiction, is the assertion that *the sun will rise to-morrow*. The sun, in its daily journey across the sky, being one of the most striking and frequent of human experiences, has been observed with some care from the earliest times, so that the first astronomers, more than four thousand years ago, had been able by careful observation to collect sufficient data on which to build up theories and formulate laws about its movements, the truth of which could be tested by deducing therefrom the position of the sun in the future and seeing if the prediction came true. With more exact observations and with greater knowledge it was established that the earth moved round the sun ; but for practical purposes the laws governing the apparent movements of the sun around the earth were almost as well known in Egyptian times as to-day. The essential point to realise is that the method of establishing the truth of the laws governing the sun's movements was essentially one of verification. When deductions were made from general laws built up by induction from a long series of observations, and the first predictions came true, it might have been only a case of coincidence. But with every repetition of a correct prediction based on these laws, the probability of these laws being true was proportionately increased with a proportionate decrease in the probability that coincidence could be accepted as explaining the correspondence

between the predicted and actually observed movements of the sun.

Similarly, we who are alive not only can make for ourselves the observations on which the laws of the sun's movements are based, but we can also predict the sun's movements and daily verify the correctness of our predictions; so that observing the sun rise day by day is of the nature of an experiment, verifying the truth of what we have been taught or learnt for ourselves about the sun. And it is an experiment which has never failed to give the expected result every day that we have lived, and which, as far as we can tell from human records, has never failed within the memory of man. Therefore we have good grounds for believing that we understand the laws or conditions under which the earth revolves round the sun. On the other hand, it is conceivable that some day an unforeseen factor might completely alter the nature of what we call sunrise, so that we cannot assert in an absolute sense that the sun will rise to-morrow. But from the fact that our knowledge of the earth's movements is based on such an exact and extended series of observations combined with almost numberless verifications, the probabilities are so enormously in favour of conditions not altering within the next twenty-four hours that for practical purposes we regard as truth itself the statement that the sun will rise to-morrow.

I have read in theological works the argument that as the certainty of to-morrow's sunrise cannot be proved in an absolute sense, belief in its coming is a matter of faith.[1] And this argument is generally used as if it were a special discovery of theologians, and was a conclusive answer to men of science, who insist on the importance of experiment and the reliability of knowledge gained through the bodily senses—if the observations made with these are carefully verified—as opposed to beliefs based on unverified and unverifiable evidence. But, as a matter of fact, science does not deny that there is an element of faith in many statements made in her name.

[1] *See* Appendix A.

What it is important to note, however, is that in all problems where faith is required, the deciding factor is probability, which is measured by the difficulty of thinking the negative of any proposition explaining the problem. Thus in the case of an identical proposition like *A is A*, or *a cat is a cat*, the negative is unthinkable; and similarly, in the case of a proposition which admits of being tested by sense, such as *ice is cold*, the negative is also unthinkable. In both these cases, because the negative is unthinkable, there is room neither for probability nor for faith, and they may be called *absolute truths*. In fact, there are no absolute truths, except such as express an unconditional generalisation, such as the above examples and our conceptions about mathematical relations. For all other *truths* are contingent on conditions remaining constant; and every truth becomes invariable only so long as conditions do not vary. Thus in more complex propositions, such as *the sun will rise to-morrow*, which do not express merely an abstract relation, the negative is not absolutely unthinkable. However, to think the negative is so difficult that there is the highest degree of probability that the proposition expresses the truth. This, then, is the first conclusion we have reached, that no proposition is absolutely true except such as expresses an unconditional generalisation, while any truth dependent on conditions requires faith. *And Probability is given by a Process of Verification.*[1]

[1] Our belief in the constancy of the order of Nature only rests on probability, although it is one to which we hold most firmly, and which we allow to influence the practical decisions of our lives at every turn, as Huxley said: "But we must recollect that any human belief, however broad its basis, however defensible it may seem, is after all only a probable belief, and that our wisest and safest generalisations are simply statements of the highest degree of probability. Though we are quite clear about the constancy of the order of Nature, at the present time, and in the present state of things, it by no means necessarily follows that we are justified in expanding this generalisation into the infinite past, and in denying absolutely that there may have been a time when Nature did not follow a fixed order, when the relations of cause and effect were not definite, and when extra-natural

This is the essence of a scientific standard of truth. Briefly stated, it insists that all observations and inferences made therefrom should be verified, and that only by combining the objective method (verification) with the subjective method (induction and deduction) can truth be established and knowledge enlarged.

Further, in complex problems where there are many factors, and truth can only be established on the contingency that conditions are constant and known, it is essential that the process of verification should be repeated if a high degree of probability is to be attained. Thus, in the case of a proposition like *the sun will rise to-morrow*, it is extremely difficult to think the negative, not so much because there has been verification on isolated occasions, but rather because the process has been repeated so many times. As we have seen, when the first predictions made by mankind about the sun's movements came true, it might have been merely a case of coincidence. But with every repetition of a correct prediction such an explanation became less probable. For the oftener an experiment is repeated, the greater chance there will be of detecting fallacies in our observations and inferences, and of discovering the presence of unsuspected factors or conditions. Thus it is repetition of the process of verification which impresses our minds; and belief can only be held with the highest degree of probability when this standard or test of truth has been applied.

agencies interfered with the general course of Nature. Cautious men will allow that a universe so different from that which we know may have existed, just as a very candid thinker may admit that a world in which two and two do not make four, and in which two straight lines do enclose a space, may exist. But the same caution which forces the admission of such possibilities demands a great deal of evidence before it recognises them to be anything more substantial. And when it is asserted that, so many thousand years ago, events occurred in a manner utterly foreign to and inconsistent with the existing laws of Nature, men who, without being particularly cautious, are simply honest thinkers, unwilling to deceive themselves or delude others, ask for trustworthy evidence of the fact." ("Essays," vol. iv., p. 48, 49.)

Here it must be clearly understood what is the meaning of the phrase *repetition of the process of verification.* It does not mean merely the devising or carrying out of a variety of experiments designed to elucidate a complex problem. For this is an attempt to carry out the process of verification in a variety of ways, and is not the same thing as repetition of the process of verification in a single or particular way. An experiment or experience can only be said to have been repeated when the conditions under which it has been carried out have remained approximately identical. For as the truth of any proposition is contingent on conditions remaining constant, so repetition of an experiment adds to the cogency of the process of verification only when the conditions have remained constant. Consequently, when we devise a variety of experiments designed to elucidate a problem, it is essential that each experiment should be repeated under conditions as nearly identical as possible; and if the conditions vary in a series of experiments, we cannot claim to have repeated the process of verification, for each time that the conditions varied, it was a different experiment which we were carrying out. This is apt to be forgotten in physiological and psychological experiments, in which an attempt is made to discover a causal connection between two groups of facts or between a group of facts and a hypothetical explanation. Thus, in the records of the Society for Psychical Research, one comes across a number of experiments or experiences which were never repeated under approximately identical conditions; and in illustration of the need of taking the utmost pains to keep the conditions under which an experiment is performed as identical as possible, I quote the following instance from my own experience :—

> I once undertook some experiments to find out the effect of injecting into animals a particular kind of serum. I was hoping that it would produce a particular effect, and I was delighted to obtain the result I expected in my very first experiment. On repeating

the experiment thirty or more times I obtained the same result in varying degrees in all but a very few experiments. Still I was not satisfied that I could be sure of a causal connection between the injection of the serum and the effect observed, till I had performed some control experiments. By *control experiments* one means observing the effect of the experimental conditions apart from the definite injection or procedure, the effect of which is being investigated. In this particular instance, instead of injecting serum, I injected a weak solution of salt; and now, in some ten experiments, I did not get the effect I had before observed after injecting serum. I then thought that I had proved a causal connection between the injection of this particular kind of serum and the effect observed. But subsequent experiments suggested by this apparent discovery showed that there was a fallacy somewhere, and ultimately I found that my ten control experiments had given me a misleading result in the following way. The animals used for my control experiments happened to be in all cases animals I had bought the day before they were used; and they were in consequence thin and half starved, in very different condition from any animal I had kept in the laboratory for a few days or weeks. In a starved animal the liver is poor in a substance called glycogen, and the effect I had observed after injecting serum depended very largely, as I ultimately found, on the presence of glycogen in the liver. I did some more control experiments in well-fed animals; and then I obtained exactly the same result as after the injection of serum. Consequently, there was no causal connection between the injection of serum and the effect observed, which was purely the result of the experimental conditions depending both on the influence of the anæsthetic and on the stimulation of visceral nerves. This case illustrates very well the difficulties of research, and how easily a fallacy creeps in, unless one has the most rigid standard of truth:

namely, to admit no causal connection until one has obtained the same result very many times under approximately identical conditions with control experiments clearly confirming; so easy is it to be deceived either by defective and biassed observation or by ignorance of all the factors concerned in the problem. In this case, through experimenting with animals in a different state of nutrition, I wasted many months of work in the belief that my first set of control experiments were performed under conditions identical with those under which I performed my other experiments.

Lastly, in any complex problem, provided that the process of verification is applied in a satisfactory manner, it is, of course, desirable to apply the process in as varied a way as possible. Thus the conditions governing the apparent movements of the sun and the motions of the heavenly bodies have been found out largely by making long series of observations at different points of the earth and at different times. But the essential factor of success has lain in making certain of the accuracy of each series by constant repetition. Consequently, in any problem where the process of verification has been applied in a variety of ways, and where our reason tells us that there is a very high degree of probability that the truth has been discovered, the essential point to remember is that the process of verification has been repeated in at least one way. And so we arrive at a rule which may be stated as follows:—*In such problems where repetition of the process of verification is not possible, the truth cannot be ascertained with a degree of probability entitling us to hold more than a strong positive opinion, and the only rational attitude is humbly to say: "We do not know."* This rule can be taken as the basis of a practical standard of truth.

Very different is the standard of truth of the average man in dealing with what may be called "supernatural problems"; for in these he is prone either to yield

credence to the teaching of authority without demanding proof satisfying a scientific standard of truth, or to be himself convinced by some striking personal experience which very often amounts to no more than a single experiment.

A good example of what I mean and witness to this tendency in human nature is afforded by a monument which stands in Devizes market-place, recording how on that spot a woman was once blasphemous enough to wish that God would strike her dead if she was not speaking the truth, and how immediately she dropped down dead.[1] In this instance there is no question of the facts; but at the same time they do not prove that God struck her dead. On the contrary, any one who was disinclined to believe the "supernatural" explanation of the facts might point out another probable explanation by recalling numerous instances where fear of the terrible consequences of some act had led to syncope—sudden stoppage of the heart—and death. For instance, in a book called "Old New Zealand" (p. 95), by Judge Maning, the case of a Maori is recorded, who, unwittingly having

[1] The complete inscription on the stone runs as follows:—"The MAYOR AND CORPORATION of DEVIZES avail themselves of the Stability of this Building to transmit to future times the Record of an awful event, which occurred in this market place in the year 1753, hoping that such record may serve as a salutary warning against the danger of impiously invoking Divine vengeance, or of calling on the Holy name of God to conceal the devices of falsehood and fraud.

"On Thursday, the 25th of January, 1753, Ruth Pierce, of Pottern, in this county, agreed with three other women to buy a sack of wheat in the market, each paying her due proportion towards the same. One of these women, in collecting the several quotas of money, discovered a deficiency, and demanded of Ruth Pierce the sum which was wanting to make good the amount; Ruth Pierce protested that she had paid her share, and said she wished she might drop down dead if she had not. She rashly repeated this awful wish, when, to the consternation and terror of the surrounding multitude, she instantly fell down and expired, having the money concealed in her hand."

eaten some food reserved for a chief, died very soon afterwards from the fear awakened by his belief in the terrible consequences which would overtake him for having eaten this sacred food.

Similarly, I have myself seen at least two men drop down dead from the nervous fear engendered by being examined at a hospital and seeing the terrible word "asthenia" written on their paper as the disease from which they were suffering. I may add that "asthenia" merely means weakness, and is often written when it is difficult to make out any definite disease. In both these cases the men had enlarged hearts, with the walls weakened by fatty degeneration.

However, there is no reason for thinking that so-called supernatural problems are not suitable questions for the reason to deal with, and therefore are not amenable to the same tests of truth as natural problems in settling their probability. The chief difficulty is that nearly all supernatural experiences are of such a nature that they are incapable of repetition under approximately identical conditions, and therefore are necessarily of the nature of single experiments. Consequently, we are unable to say with a degree of probability amounting to certainty that we understand all the factors or conditions involved in any supernatural problem. This being the case, the only rational attitude, as we have seen, is one of humble agnosticism. At the same time the solution of many of these questions is of such practical importance to us that it is hardly possible to avoid holding a very strong opinion or belief about the "supernatural." And in fact, there is nothing unscientific or unreasonable about "making up our minds" on these subjects, if we do not profess to found our opinions on a supernatural standard of truth superior to that of science, and if we also recognise the importance of possessing as great a knowledge of the facts of life as possible.[1] For convictions based on

[1] Huxley maintained that agnosticism was not merely a negative attitude, when he wrote: ". . . a man may be

probability may subsequently have to be given up, if with wider experience our reason tells us that the old beliefs do not harmonise with or explain the newer facts and therefore are not probable. As G. H. Lewes says (*Prolegomena* § 35), "Finally, it is notorious that our experience, even when uniform, is narrow; so that when a man affirms anything on the guarantee of its negative being unthinkable, we can disturb his confidence by showing that the negative is thinkable and conformable with a wider experience."

And yet at first sight there is something to be said for the habit of mind of the mystic, whereby he has a standard of truth for personal religious experiences different from that which he has for solving physical problems. For an introspective or self-conscious experience is apt to carry a sense of cogency even greater than that attaching to impressions derived through the five senses; and if only we could find good reasons for trusting in an absolute sense the cogency attaching to a personal spiritual experience, that alone would constitute a good reason for having a double standard of truth. But can we?

In the domain of physical research the necessity for a rigid standard of truth arises from the fact that not only are we liable to be the victims of bias in interpreting the data obtained with the use of our five senses, but also that our senses themselves are subject to disturbing factors leading to error. These may be wholly central—that is, associated with subtle changes in the higher centres of the brain—as shown to an exaggerated degree in the condition known as "delirium tremens," where the

an agnostic in the sense of admitting he has no positive knowledge, and yet consider that he has more or less probable ground for accepting any given hypothesis about the spiritual world. Just as a man may frankly declare that he has no means of knowing whether the planets generally are inhabited or not, and yet may think one of the two possible hypotheses more likely than the other, so he may admit that he has no means of knowing anything about the spiritual world, and yet may think one or other of the current views on the subject to some extent probable." ("Essays," vol. v., p. 328.)

victim of inebriety may see objects (*e.g.*, snakes or rats) corresponding to no external reality, or they may be situated in the peripheral part of the sense organ, as for instance, where the floating bodies in the vitreous humour of the eye—known as "muscæ volitantes"—by casting a shadow on the retina, have often led people to think they saw bodies floating about in the air which had no real existence. Again, the impression gained through a sense may be masked or altered by changes set up in that sense-organ by previous or simultaneous stimuli of a different nature, as, for instance, where our impression of some colour is quite altered by the contrast of some other colour, or where our sense of taste is totally different after some drug like cocaine. Now, though these examples of perverted sense-impressions are well marked and obvious, it is impossible to draw any sharp dividing line between them and more subtle conditions. Varying degrees of fatigue for instance, of which it is most difficult to be aware, may at any time be a subtle cause of error in making observations with our senses.

Similarly, in the domain of self-consciousness, as every mental phenomenon is associated with some material change in the brain, it is obvious that here, too, there will be a likelihood of circulatory, chemical and other subtle changes affecting the nature of our spiritual impressions. And it is impossible to draw a sharp line between obviously morbid experiences, such as those described in a paper entitled *Certain Mental Changes That Accompany Visceral Disease*, by Henry Head ("Brain," xxiv., 1901), and the phenomena resulting from less pronounced degrees of fatigue or disease. Again, the influence of early training admittedly colours the complexion of our self-conscious experiences. Thus, a child who has been taught that a certain course of action is wrong, will be liable to have qualms of conscience in regard to this particular act, although it may be something which a member of another race or creed might regard as absolutely harmless. For instance, the example already given of the Maori dying after eating food reserved for a

chief illustrates well the operation of conscience under circumstances which would leave an Englishman unaffected. And similarly, in insanity, the nature of the delusion depends very largely on the character of the ideas which have formed the child's mind. Thus, a Roman Catholic, who firmly believes in the infallibility of the Pope, never becomes the victim of the delusion of having committed the "unpardonable sin,"—which is a comparatively common delusion among Calvinists who get mentally deranged—for a belief in the infallibility of the Pope implies a belief in his ability to forgive all sins. Now, as all psychologists tell us, it is impossible to draw a sharp line between sanity and insanity, so we are all liable to have our conscious life more or less coloured by delusions, which, in these slighter forms, we call bias. Even the Roman Catholic Church admits the truth of this, as shown by the fact that, recognising the danger of trusting to the guidance of conscience in an absolute sense, she insists on the necessity of admitting "authority," and submitting thereto personal experience. And without necessarily admitting the authority of the Catholic Church, every thoughtful man will acknowledge the wisdom of this principle; for the history of Quakerism illustrates well the danger of trusting absolutely to the guidance of conscience, as, for instance, when George Fox ran about Lichfield market-place more or less naked and shouting: "Woe to the bloody city of Lichfield."

A further illustration, for the truth of which a medical friend vouches, is so typical, that I feel justified in inserting it here. A minister in the "Society of Friends" was overworked and suffering from depression. One day, in obedience to the voice of conscience, he tried to drown himself. On finding himself in the water, the natural animal instinct of self-preservation made him struggle to the bank. There he crawled out of the water, and, kneeling by the river side, asked God in prayer if He had not made a mistake in telling him to drown himself. He

imagined that God, in the form of the voice of conscience, answered: "It was no mistake. You did right in following your conscience." So the poor man threw himself in the river a second time, and a second time his instinct of self-preservation impelled him to struggle out. Then he made his way to the nearest police station, and so came under medical treatment.

Now, since it is just because our impressions of sense are so untrustworthy[1] that we require a rigid standard of truth in dealing with natural problems, and since our reason only admits a high degree of probability or proof when the process of verification has been repeated again and again, there can be no good reason for attaching a superior cogency to personal religious experiences, which not only may be influenced by morbid bodily processes, as we have seen, but also are seldom, if ever, capable of verification or repetition.

If, then, what I have written has found acceptance with the reader, he will agree that *the only reasonable attitude for a sensible man to adopt towards any problem dealing with the supernatural, which cannot be submitted to a scientific standard of truth, is that of saying, "I do not know, yet such and such is my opinion," and that in these cases, the wider his experience, the more probably will his opinion approximate towards the truth.*

[1] As G. H. Lewes says (*Prolegomena*, § 38): "Subjective agreement is as perfect in hallucination as in perception, which M. Taine happily calls *une hallucination vraie*. How then are we ever to be certain that our formulas are true, that the order of our ideas is in correspondence with the order of things? . . . When all the senses converge, when all the evidence corroborates, we are forced to believe in the objective reality, unless we declare all existence to be a dream."

EVIDENCE

" How is a fact verified ? By submitting each of its constituent inferences to the primordial test of Consciousness. The test with regard to objects within range of sense is obviously the reduction of Inference to Sensation. The test with regard to axioms, or general principles transcending sense, is conformity with the laws of thought : when we have thus verified a fact we have attained the highest degree of certitude." (G. H. Lewes, *Prolegomena*, § 15.)

CHAPTER II

The Value of Evidence

Having now defined our attitude towards truth, and shown the difficulty of attaining certainty, we are ready to study the evidence for the "supernatural." But before doing so, we must consider what constitutes valuable evidence in general, as the nature of our opinions on questions dealing with the "supernatural" turns very largely on our realising the value of evidence.

To the ordinary mind the word *evidence* will suggest a legal rather than a scientific connotation. But for our present purpose the scientific use of the word chiefly needs our consideration. For whereas lawyers for practical purposes have to rest content with human evidence rendered fairly accurate by cross-examination and other legal methods, science rests content with nothing less than the greatest accuracy possible, though she recognises that absolute accuracy may never be attained.

There are many factors tending to render human evidence unreliable; but the sources of error may roughly be divided into two main classes under the headings (*a*) physical, (*b*) psychical. As regards the former class, I do not propose to say much, since it is obvious that alterations in the sense-organs themselves, as indicated in the last chapter, may lead to faulty observation. It is rather the psychical or mental causes of unreliable or inaccurate evidence that I wish to dwell upon. In this connection human evidence must be looked at from two points of view, that of observation and that of interpretation. For, in the first place, a man may be unreliable in the observations he makes, and in the second

place, even if the facts are correctly observed, his interpretation of them may be entirely wrong.[1]

In order to make accurate observations, a certain amount of training is necessary. Just as it takes practice to become a good public speaker, though every man has the organs for speaking, so the possession of a pair of eyes does not in itself give the power to use them or to express accurately what is seen with them. The average man has no idea how difficult it is merely to observe the minutiæ of almost any phenomenon, till he has attempted the task of solving some problem on the lines of a scientific research. A certain amount of training, that is, of knowledge, is almost essential in order to enable one to be on the look-out for phenomena which are likely to take place. On the other hand, an even greater source of error is the bias of some preconceived theory as to what is likely to take place, quite unconsciously blinding one to what actually takes place and leading one to see phenomena which never occurred at all. It is a similar type of bias developed in childhood which has done so much to perpetuate religious differences in the world; for the adult mind, which can reason quite well on matters about which it feels no bias, is apt to have its reasoning faculties fettered in favour of that view which has got linked up with an emotional interest, such as is given by association with childhood's teaching, connected as it often is with early memories of a beloved mother. Of course it is well-nigh impossible to approach any problem, even one of purely scientific interest, without having some preconceived views on the subject. But it is the mark of a great mind that, as soon as it finds that the facts will not support these views, it is ready to abandon them. It is this quality among others which has made certain scientific men—Darwin for instance—so eminently great.[2]

[1] Dr. Hodgson wrote an article on "The Possibilities of Malobservation" in the "Proceedings of the S.P.R.," vol. iv., p. 387, where many good illustrations of this source of error in a story are given.

[2] Mr. Taylor Innes has a very pertinent passage about the effect

The psychical causes of unreliable observation, apart from obvious physical disabilities, are thus due to *want of training and bias*. Very similar are the causes of the erroneous interpretation of phenomena which may have themselves been accurately observed. For in order to see the proper bearing of any set of facts, we require the appropriate kind of training. Thus, we do not go to a doctor for a reliable opinion on a legal question, nor to a lawyer for a medical opinion. In fact, though the need for expert opinion in life may be exaggerated, it cannot be dispensed with in the present state of differentiated knowledge. Then bias again is a source of error, even greater perhaps in the interpretation than in the observation of phenomena. Unless the reasoning faculties are unhampered by preconceived views they are very liable to lead one astray in assigning cause to effect.

One of the best illustrations of malobservation combined with erroneous interpretation of the phenomena is the famous case in which the Master of Lindsay, Viscount Adare and Captain Wynne, thought they saw the medium, Daniel Dunglas Home, float out of one window and in at another at 5, Buckingham Gate, London, on December 16th, 1868. Here is the account written by Lord Lindsay on July 14th, 1871, about two and a half years afterwards, and published in a pamphlet entitled, "Psychic Power

of bias in tales of the supernormal and in psychical researches, where he says, "The truth is, the great difficulty in this matter" —(the question of phantasms of the living)—"has always been (on the side both of experiment and testimony) that men have generally been too restless to deal with it according to simple and scientific rule, and have been found, almost as soon as they were unwatched by the eyes of others, scratching at the wall of the unseen. For this reason, I have always expected most from inquirers who had no great personal interest, religious or irreligious, in this matter, whose faith in the unseen was already solidly based on moral considerations, and whose object as investigators was merely to conquer for science a small strip of neutral ground." ("Where are the Letters?" *Nineteenth Century*, vol. xxii., p. 193.)

—Spirit Power, Experimental Investigation" (London, 1871): "I was sitting with Mr. Home and Lord Adare and a cousin of his. During the sitting Mr. Home went into a trance, and in that state was carried out of the window in the room next to where we were, and was brought in at our window. The distance between the windows was about seven feet six inches, and there was not the slightest foothold between them, nor was there more than a twelve-inch projection to each window, which served as a ledge to put flowers on. We heard the window in the next room lifted up, and almost immediately after we saw Home floating in the air outside our window. The moon was shining full into the room; my back was to the light, and I saw the shadow on the wall of the window-sill and Home's feet about six inches above it. He remained in this position for a few seconds, then raised the window and glided into the room feet foremost and sat down."

The account of the phenomenon given by the same observer to the Committee of the Dialectical Society in July, 1869, only about six months after the occurrence, is also worth reproducing for comparison: "I saw the levitations in Victoria Street when Home floated out of the window. He first went into a trance and walked about uneasily; he then went into the hall. While he was away I heard a voice whisper in my ear, 'He will go out of one window and in at another.' I was alarmed and shocked at so dangerous an experiment. I told the company what I had heard, and we then waited for Home's return. Shortly after he entered the room. I heard the window go up, but I could not see it, for I sat with my back to it. I, however, saw his shadow on the opposite wall; he went out of the window in a horizontal position, and I saw him outside the other window (that is, the next room), floating in the air. It was eighty-five feet from the ground." ("Report of the Dialectical Society," p. 214.)

As the séance took place on the third floor, it is obvious that eighty-five feet is an inaccuracy in the report; but perhaps it is only a clerical error for thirty-five feet.

The discrepancies in the two accounts are doubtless due to inaccurate reporting, but the statement about the shadow cast by the moon is an instance of mal-observation, as the moon was new on December 13th, 1868, three days before the séance. In both accounts the impression is given that the observer saw Home floating in a horizontal position. Now, as Lord Adare states that Home stood upright, one of the two observers must have been mistaken. Here is Lord Adare's account: "We heard Home go into the next room, heard the window thrown up, and presently Home appeared standing upright outside our window; he opened the window and walked in quite coolly." ("Life of D. D. Home," by his wife, p. 301.) The only observation from Captain Wynne is contained in a letter to Home, dated February 2nd, 1877, and runs as follows:—"The fact of your having gone out of one window and in at the other I can swear to." ("Life of D. D. Home," p. 307.)

I give no further commentary on the case myself, as all that can be said has been put so well by Mr. Frank Podmore, who devoted the best years of his life to the investigation of psychical problems. He writes:—"It is to be noted that, as we learn from Lord Adare's account, there was no light in the room during the séance, except such as came through the window (from a moon two days old); that Lord Lindsay had, at an earlier period of the evening, seen an apparition of a man sitting in a chair; that one of the spirits before the performance had announced what it was proposed to do; and finally that on a previous occasion a few days before, in presence of two of the same witnesses, Home had opened the same window, stepped on the ledge outside, and remained standing there, to the great alarm of Lord

Lindsay, looking down at the street some eighty feet below. The medium had thus, as it were, furnished a rough sketch of the picture which he aimed at producing. Whatever the nature of the complex illusion, however, whether of sense or of memory—or, as seems likely, of both—it is certain that it was shared in the retrospect by all the three persons present. Actually, however, the collective part of the illusion is seen in analysis to have been of a comparatively unimpressive kind. From Lord Lindsay's account, the most detailed record which we have of the actual levitation, it would seem that Home, probably after having announced that the spirits were about to carry him through the air from one window to another, left the room. A sound was heard, which may or may not have been due to the cause which it suggested, the opening of the window in the next room. Shortly afterwards Lord Lindsay, who had his back to the window, saw on the opposite wall a shadow thrown by the faint moonlight, which suggested to him that Home was outside the window; and he appears to have accepted the assurance of the "spirits" that in fact the medium had been conveyed to that point through the air from the window ledge to the adjoining room. Whether Lord Adare or Captain Wynne had their eyes turned towards the window, or generally upon what impressions of sense they based their conviction that Home had actually been levitated, does not appear. Remembering that the room was lighted only by a moon two days old, we are clearly not justified in attaching more weight to their general statements than to the detailed record of Lord Lindsay. How much that record is worth as evidence for a miracle, the reader, with the depositions before him, may judge for himself." ("Modern Spiritualism," vol. ii., p. 258.)

To complete the review of this case, I am adding the following paragraph from Professor Newcomb's article on "Modern Occultism" (*Nineteenth Cen-*

tury, No. 383, p. 137):—"Now, if we admit the existence of gifted individuals having such abnormal powers as these, why not equally admit the existence of men having the faculty of seeing, or thinking they remember having seen, the non-existent? The latter certainly seems much easier to suppose than does the former. It is a familiar fact of physiological optics that, in a faint light, if the eyes are fixed upon an object, the latter gradually becomes clouded and finally disappears entirely. Then it requires only a little heightening of a not unusual imagination to believe that, if the object that disappeared was a man, he wafted himself through the air and went out of the window."[1]

A third source of error which ought perhaps to be mentioned, as it is frequently seen in connection with spiritualism, is the tendency of an idea or story to grow in the mind. Consequently, a most necessary part of the equipment for doing scientific research is the habit of noting down accurately phenomena as they occur. If the record of an experiment is not made till later, it is so easy to deceive oneself under the influence of bias or faulty memory, and imagine afterwards, quite genuinely, that phenomena took place which actually never occurred.[2]

[1] For a fuller account of and commentary on this remarkable case the reader should refer to Podmore's "Newer Spiritualism," pp. 66-72. It ends as follows: "What no doubt happened was that Home, having noisily opened the window in the next room, slipped back under cover of the darkness into the séance room, got behind the curtain, opened the window and stepped on to the window-ledge."

[2] In other words, a narrator's belief in his own belief is of minor consequence. "What really is important," as Mr. Innes says, "and in the ordinary case is conclusive, is a writing which passes out of the hand of the 'percipient' or dreamer, before the news reaches him, which confirms from without what he has already written and sent away. And most fortunately this, which is the conclusive case, must be also a very common one" (*Nineteenth Century*, vol. xxii., p. 177). But, curiously enough, in stories

Thus I myself was once witness and cause of an instance of supposed telepathy on the part of my wife. I was on a long journey from home when I broke my leg, and, not wishing to cause my wife anxiety, I did not mention the fact in writing to her next day. But knowing that she would get to hear of it, I thought I would prepare her for the news by making a joking reference to how I should behave under certain conditions if I had a broken leg. Her answer to this letter showed not the least anxiety, and implied how much she had been amused by my little joke about a broken leg. Yet months afterwards I heard my wife telling some friend how, when I broke my leg, she had a dreadful feeling of anxiety, and knew at the time that some dreadful accident was taking place.

Another example illustrating the need for a written and dated document at the time of an occurrence, if we are to be sure of the accuracy of a remembered event, is furnished by the well known case of Judge Hornby.

"In the *Nineteenth Century* for July 1884, an article appeared from Messrs. Gurney and Myers, which was justly regarded as affording the most indisputable evidence ever adduced for the re-appearance of a dead person. Sir Edmond Hornby, a judge of the Consular Court at Shanghai, had been visited during the night by a reporter desiring a copy of a decision which he was to deliver on the following morning. He rose from his bed, dictated what he had to say, and dismissed the reporter with a rebuke for having disturbed him. Next morning, on going to court, he was astounded by learning that the

alleging the crossing of letters or the making of a note in a diary, the letters or the diary can hardly ever be produced. Consequently, the absence of documentary evidence in cases where it can reasonably be demanded, gets to have almost a positive value, and becomes "nearly as conclusive against a story as the presence of such evidence would be in its favour."

reporter, with whom he was well acquainted, had died suddenly during the night. Inquiring after the hour of the demise, he found it to coincide with that of the nightly visitation. The authors also informed us in the article that the story was confirmed by Lady Hornby, who was mentioned in it, and was cognisant of the circumstances.

This narrative was almost unique in that it admitted of verification. When it reached Shanghai, it met the eyes of some acquainted with the actual facts. These were made known in another publication, and showed that several months must have elapsed between the reporter's death and the judge's vision. The latter was only a vivid dream about a dead person. When the case was brought to the judge's attention, he did not deny the new version, and could only say he had supposed the facts to be as he had narrated them." (Quoted from Professor Newcomb's article on " Modern Occultism," *Nineteenth Century*, No, 383, p. 135.)

A fourth source of error may be the omission of some pertinent detail in the account of an occurrence, which otherwise does not deviate from the truth in any particular. Professor Newcomb, in the article above cited, gives an excellent example. He says :—" I once examined an interesting case of this kind at the request of Dr. Hodgson. A naval ship had been wrecked in a storm off Cape Hatteras some years before, and most of those on board, including the captain, had perished. Before she sailed on her voyage, one of her officers was seized with so strong and persistent a presentiment that the ship would be lost, that he formally requested to be detached from her. This being refused, he left his post of duty and was tried by court-martial for desertion. Dr. Hodgson desired me to see whether this story could be verified by the official records. This was easily done, and the narrative was found to be substantially correct so far as it went. But it omitted to state that the officer had exhibited symptoms

of mental aberration before his presentiment, that the latter was only one of a great number of wild fears which he had expressed to various parties, including his superior officer, and that several months elapsed after this before the ship sailed on her fateful voyage, she having in the meantime made several trips on the coast. When thus completed, the story became altogether commonplace."

But the errors of omission can really be included in the larger category of "inaccurate reporting," perhaps the commonest source of error permeating psychical literature. In illustration of this tendency, the following passage from Podmore's "Modern Spiritualism" is worth quoting:—

> "A striking instance of inaccurate reporting is furnished by Miss Martineau. In her 'Letters on Mesmerism' she relates that a vague report had come on Sunday, October 13th, 1884, to the house at Tynemouth where she was then lodging, that the boat in which a cousin of her clairvoyant subject, Jane, was sailing, had been wrecked. On the Tuesday evening no authentic news as to the fate of the sailors had, according to Miss Martineau, reached the house up till 8 p.m. At that hour a séance was held, and the entranced Jane gave the joyful news that all on board were saved, except one boy, and that the boat which rescued them was a foreign one. At the very hour, Miss Martineau adds, when this intelligence was being delivered in her sitting-room, the sailor's mother, who had come in after the commencement of the séance, and without the knowledge of Miss Martineau and her circle, was telling the same story in the kitchen, two floors below. In his 'Illustrations of Modern Mesmerism,' Forbes shows, on the evidence of a local doctor and of one of the witnesses at the séance, that the good news was actually known in the house three hours before the sitting. Miss Martineau's deafness may have accounted for the misunderstanding. In her 'Autobiography' (edition of

1877, vol. ii., p. 198), Miss Martineau, referring to Forbes's action in the matter, states that she holds a legal declaration, which 'establishes the main fact on which the somnambule's story of shipwreck was attempted to be overthrown.' But she gives no particulars, nor attempts to refute Dr. Forbes's exposure in detail." (Vol. i., p. 153, footnote.)

It is owing to the recognition of all these sources of error in human evidence,[1] when witnesses are not consciously trying to deceive, that science has found it necessary to have such a rigid standard of truth; namely, to be agnostic about any causal sequence, until the phenomena have been repeated under the same conditions a sufficient number of times to convert a probability of the supposed causal sequence being true into a relative certainty. But since all history is of such a nature that repetition of any event under identical conditions is well-nigh impossible, it may be asked if any credence can be given to historical evidence at all. And an opponent of the scientific point of view apparently has a good opportunity of covering it with ridicule by arguing, as a "reductio ad absurdum," that some well known historical event, such as the death of Julius Cæsar, never took place. Indeed, all historical events constitute cases where perhaps the strictest reasoning would dictate an attitude of agnosticism, but where for practical purposes each one of us cannot help having some settled conviction, which

[1] An eminent judge, whose opinion I once asked about the trustworthiness of evidence, told me that, in his experience, most witnesses tried to tell the truth, but were quite incapable of doing so. On the other hand, he thought he generally knew by small subconscious signs, such as furtive glances, if a witness had made up his mind beforehand to lie.

Podmore, who probably had investigated more stories of the supernormal than any of his contemporaries, summed up his experience as follows: "It seems difficult to place any limit on the untrustworthiness of human testimony, especially in cases where the emotions are involved, or where there is occasion for edification." ("Telepathic Hallucinations," p. 36.)

is so extremely probable that it amounts almost to knowledge.

For practical purposes, then, we may say we believe or know any piece of history to be true if the human evidence on which it rests has been sifted and found to stand the test of historical criticism, and if it does not involve the occurrence of something which for philosophical or other reasons we call extremely improbable.[1] But where an element of improbability is felt, we should be much more inclined to an agnostic attitude, remembering the unreliability of human evidence; or at least subject the evidence to the severest criticism before we say we believe. Thus as there is nothing improbable about the death of Julius Cæsar, we find little difficulty in believing it on the evidence, preserved by history, of the witnesses who saw it; but as regards the portents which the same witnesses say occurred to indicate his approaching death —which Shakespeare has so dramatically rendered for

[1] Huxley's dictum on this subject was as follows: "The rule of common sense is *prima facie* to trust a witness in all matters, in which neither his self-interest, his passions, his prejudices, nor that love of the marvellous which is inherent to a greater or less degree in mankind, are strongly concerned; and, when they are involved, to require corroborative evidence in exact proportion to the contravention of probability by the thing testified." ("Essays," vol. v., p. 226.) And he illustrated it with an essay entitled "The Value of Witness to the Miraculous," which, in my opinion, is one of the most important contributions to the subject of psychical research ever made, and which may be summarised in Huxley's own words as follows: "The story of the 'Translation of the Blessed Martyrs Marcellinus and Petrus,' and the other considerations (to which endless additions might have been made from the Fathers and the mediæval writers) set forth in a preceding essay, yield, in my judgment, satisfactory proof that, where the miraculous is concerned, neither considerable intellectual ability, nor undoubted honesty, nor knowledge of the world, nor proved faithfulness as civil historians, nor profound piety, on the part of eye-witnesses and contemporaries, affords any guarantee of the objective truth of their statements, when we know that a firm belief in the miraculous was ingrained in their minds, and was the presupposition of their observations and reasonings." ("Essays," vol. v., p. 329.)

us—there is much greater difficulty in belief, because an element of improbability is introduced, founded on the fact that within our own experience and also within that of what I may call " scientific man " portents have never been shown with certainty to occur ; and, on the other hand, we know from history that in the time of Julius Cæsar a belief in portents was almost universal, so that the witnesses of his death were biassed in this respect.[1]

The value of historical evidence at the same time is by no means easy to determine. Thus I myself was satisfied for some years with the answer of a distinguished historian—whom, as an expert historian and as an earnest old-fashioned Christian, I asked about these questions

[1] Some remarks of Podmore on the subject of ghosts are worth recalling : " If we are justified then in our suspicion of the sea-serpent, we are doubly justified in the reluctant hearing which we yield to ghost stories. Man, as has been said by some one, is not naturally a veridical animal. It is not, in fact, an easy thing to tell the truth. It is the most difficult of all arts, and one of the latest acquirements of the most civilised races. There are, in the first place, defects and excesses in narration caused by self-interest, or by the dramatic instinct, the love of telling a good story. But defects of this kind are generally recognised and proportionately easy to guard against. The real danger is more subtle. Not only our memory, but our very acts of perception are shaped by our preconceptions and prejudices. To put it crudely, what we see and what we remember is not what actually happened, but what we think ought to have happened or what was likely to have happened. The retina supplies us with an imperfect photograph, a crude sensation. But this imperfect photograph is not ' perceived ' until it has been telegraphed up to higher brain centres, and it is the business of these higher centres to touch up the photograph, to fill in the lacunæ, to select what seem the more salient and notable features, and to colour the whole with the emotion appropriate to the situation. It is likely that in most cases something is added to improve the picture. The result is no longer a photograph, but a finished work of art, which contains at once more and less than the photograph—the original sensation. This process of selection and embellishment may be carried still further in the memory, until at last the finished picture may come to bear no essential resemblance to the original retinal photograph." (" Telepathic Hallucinations," p. 4.)

in my search after truth—to the effect that the evidence for certain miracles was as good as that for the death of Julias Cæsar or any other well-known and accepted historical event. But I realise now how his Christian belief biassed his opinion as an historian, and that he would have done better to have answered, " the evidence for these miracles is quite as good as that for any other supernatural event recorded in history." For the evidence for any miracle is not as good as that for some natural historical event like the death of Julius Cæsar, because an element of improbability is introduced owing to the fact that within the experience of " scientific man " miracles do not occur. One more illustration will perhaps render clearer my point that there is a great difference between the value of historical evidence about natural and supernatural events. The Spanish historian tells us that when Cortes landed in Mexico with his small heroic band of followers, he only had 553 soldiers and 110 sailors to conquer at least 100,000 Aztecs. Yet we feel no inherent impossibility in believing that by wily policy combined with heroism he succeeded in conquering the country, although his chance of success appeared very small at first. But when we read that the Spaniards were cheered on to victory by seeing St. James mounted on a warhorse at the head of the Christian squadrons, we feel that it is more probable that this event had origin in the Spaniards' imagination rather than in fact,[1] as, on the one hand, we know that man in mediæval times

[1] Instances of the miraculous appearance of St. James or other saints are recorded on pp. 136, 392, and 420, of Prescott's " History of the Conquest of Mexico " (1878 edition). One of the appearances is described as follows:—" Sinner that I am," exclaims honest Bernal Diaz in a more sceptical vein, " it was not permitted me to see either the one or the other of the Apostles on this occasion." (" Hist. de la Conquista," Cap. 34), to which Prescott adds the following note: " The remark of Bernal Diaz is not to be taken as ironical. His faith in the same vision on subsequent occasions is expressed without demur. In the present case he recognised the rider of the grey horse as a Spanish cavalier, Francisco de Morla."

very commonly believed in the visible presence of heavenly agents during times of stress, and on the other hand no satisfactory evidence of an analogous phenomenon has been recorded during the past century, when phenomena have been subjected at the time of their supposed occurrence to more searching and scientific criticism.

I have just used the word "analogous," which leads me to point out the use and abuse of "analogy." In a scientific problem, though a very hopeful line of research may be suggested by analogy, yet if analogy is assumed to amount to proof, there is very great probability of one's being led into error. A simple example is the following :—

> One of the most striking phenomena in physiology is the fact that excision of the pancreas in a mammal is followed by a marked and almost immediate excretion of sugar by the kidneys, a condition known as "pancreatic diabetes." Now, on analogy, it might be assumed that the same thing would be seen in birds. And, as a matter of fact, excision of the pancreas does set up a very similar condition, at any rate in the duck. But the duck's kidney is so far different from the mammalian kidney that it does not excrete the sugar, which consequently accumulates in the blood. Thus, although the degree of hyperglycæmia (sugar in the blood) after excision of the pancreas is greater in ducks than in mammals, yet, judging from the degree of glucosuria (sugar in the urine), one might think that excision of the pancreas was not followed by the same disturbance of sugar-consumption in ducks as in mammals.

Here we see that analogy puts one on the right track ; but if one does not know all the facts of the case, one is apt to be deceived. The value of the analogical method lies in its suggesting the probable line of finding the truth ; and in problems where the phenomena are not capable of repetition, it is a great aid in deciding the probability of the truth on other lines than those of scientific proof.

But it is most important to remember that it does not itself rise to the dignity of scientific proof, and that it is a method which, if honestly used, is apt to cut both ways in controversy, as it is often not difficult to get analogies both supporting and controverting the same position. Thus ideas of anthropomorphic gods naturally spring up among savage people on the analogy of human activity, and, similarly, all believers in a personal God are liable to attribute to Him man-like qualities. But with greater knowledge we see that on the analogy of a beetle being quite unable to form a conception of the human mind, so it is quite as probable that the human mind is unable to understand the processes whereby matter originated, and that the whole conception of creator and created is vitiated by the limitations of human intellectual capacity.

Analogy, consequently, is of but little help in discussing supernatural and, still less, extraterrestrial problems, where the conditions may be totally different from anything with which we are acquainted on earth. This is well illustrated in the discussion which of recent years has centred round the question of life on the planet Mars or other planet or star. Popular writers, who are satisfied that the facts of observation are sufficient to prove the existence of Martians, are apt to write as if language and distance were the only difficulties in the way of communication between the Earth and Mars. But, assuming the existence of Martians, it is extremely unlikely that the processes of evolution in a different environment would result in the evolution of a vertebrate identical with man, and on the other hand it is possible that living processes can be associated under unknown conditions with other than complex carbon compounds. Thus, by a mistaken use of analogy, we are far too prone to exalt terrestrial conditions to a universal standard. In short, analogy is useful by way of illustration, but useless as a means of proof.

Under the heading " inaccurate reporting " may also be included the errors which arise in the transmission of a story through faulty memory. I have already

pointed out how necessary it is to have some independent test of the accuracy of a remembered event in the form of a written and dated document.[1] And in a similar way error is very apt to creep in, if one trusts too much to one's memory in repeating evidence based on other than personal experience. The imaginary "They" is so apt to be quoted as a reliable authority, when one asks for the reference or name of the witness vouching for the truth of some story of the supernatural. This tendency, in conjunction with bias, is the great parent of superstition, and is quite sufficient to account for the spread of any fabulous idea; for instance, the fatal properties of the number thirteen. How this particular superstition was spread by the biographer of Sir John Everett Millais was so well shown up by a correspondent of the *Spectator*,[2] that I cannot refrain from quoting the facts as a typical illustration of my point.

> In August, 1885, Sir John Everett Millais was entertaining a house-party at Birnam Hall, his Scottish home, and among the guests were Matthew Arnold, a Mr. Edgar Dawson, a Mr. E. S., and a Miss G. S. One day they discovered that the party at table was

[1] Mr. Innes showed that in the 702 cases, quoted by Gurney, Myers and Podmore in their book entitled "Phantasms of the Living," there was not a *single* one "in which the indefatigable editors have seen or ascertained a letter or document issued at the time by the narrator, so as to prove his story to be true," although there were more than 20 cases in which documentary evidence was alleged to have been issued at the time and at least one hundred cases in which documentary corroboration could reasonably be demanded. Further, he showed that in nine cases the story was weakened rather than strengthened by the documentary evidence, which in these cases had been forthcoming and seen by the editors of "Phantasms of the Living." (See "Where are the Letters?" *Nineteenth Century*, vol. xxii., pp.185-187.)

[2] The letter in the *Spectator* occurs on March 7th, 1908, p. 373, while the original story of the dinner-party will be found in "Life and Letters of Sir John Everett Millais," by J. G. Millais, vol. ii., p. 182. (1899 ed., Methuen.)

exactly thirteen, at which information Miss G. S. was greatly alarmed, and exclaimed in consternation, "I fear that some calamity will happen."

Before the end of dinner, the conversation drifted back inevitably to the fatal number, and Matthew Arnold is said to have exclaimed:—"And now, Miss S., the idea is that whoever leaves the table first will die within a year, so, with the permission of the ladies, we will cheat the fates for once. I and these fine strong lads (pointing to Edgar Dawson and E. S.) will all rise together, and I think our united constitutions will be able to withstand the assault of the Reaper."

Matthew Arnold, according to the story, died six months afterwards, and a little later E. S. was found in bed, killed by a revolver, which lay empty beside him. In the meantime, Edgar Dawson had gone out to Australia, and after the two sudden deaths there was naturally anxiety as to what should happen to him within the fatal year. On February 18th, 1886, he left Melbourne in the steamer *Quetta*. The steamer went down off the coast of New Guinea, and Dawson was drowned. "And now," writes the biographer, "what shall be said to these things?"

That is the famous story which the following letter of a correspondent of the *Spectator* tears to pieces by a cold examination of the alleged facts. "The facts! The party is said to have taken place in August, 1885. Accordingly, Arnold must have died in March, 1886, and the *Quetta* must have gone down about the same time. Every one knows that Matthew Arnold died in April, 1888, and I have just come across a reference to the wreck of the *Quetta*, by one who lost several relatives in the wreck, as 1890. What could a serious biographer have been about when he allowed his memory to trick him into penning such a piece of circumstantial nonsense? In view of these glaring discrepancies, it is allowable to discredit the whole story, however it may have formed itself in the

writer's mind. Arnold knew from about 1868 that his life was precarious, and that his end was likely to be very sudden. Is it likely that, even in jest, he ever uttered such a speech as is here put into his mouth ? "

The writer concludes with the observation that, with the real facts before them, many will not willingly give up the old story of Matthew Arnold and the fatal number thirteen.

The moral of this incident is the necessity of verifying all the facts of a story before quoting it by looking up the printed records of the facts. At the same time, a warning is necessary to guard against the very general tendency of regarding anything in print as accurate. How easily error creeps into even an official publication was very well illustrated by another correspondence which took place in the *Daily Graphic* in 1905. As it is rather a good example of supposed telepathy, and illustrates the need for accuracy on the part of the sceptical critic, I hope the following account will interest the reader :—

Letter from Lady Florence Dixie about the death of Lord Francis Douglas in the *Daily Graphic*, September 9th, 1905.

" Sir,

" I do not pretend to account for the following incident, but only know and vouch for the fact that it took place. When I was a very little child, my second brother (Lord Francis Douglas), then barely eighteen years of age, was killed in the first successful ascent of the Matterhorn. The accident took place on July 14th, my mother's birthday. That night my mother and myself were in London, passing through it *en route* for home. We stayed there one night to break the journey, and my brother was expected back early to take part in the festivities arranged in Scotland for the coming-of-age of my eldest brother Queensberry.

"My mother and myself occupied one room that night and went to bed early. There was no apprehension about my brother in Switzerland. About 10.30 p.m. the door of our bedroom opened, and my mother's maid appeared. Her name was Emily Whiting; but we both called her by the pet name of "Bengy," whereas my brother Francis always called her Whiting. She came in and asked my mother if she had called her, and on being replied to in the negative retired. About eleven o'clock she returned again, declaring that her name had been distinctly called, but was once more sent away. A third time (it was nearly twelve o'clock) she came back, assuring my mother that a voice had called her, and each time by the name of Whiting. She was certain the voice was near.

"Annoyed at this frequent disturbance, my mother told her to go back to bed, and not to come again. Yet a fourth time she reappeared, and this time in a very agitated state. She declared that she had had a dream or vision, in which she saw my brother Francis lying on a rocky ledge on a great precipice, terribly wounded. He was dragging himself along. This dream seemed to startle my mother; but she tried to soothe the maid, and got her to go back to bed.

"A few days later news came of the terrible accident on the Matterhorn, in which my brother, Mr. Hudson, Mr. Haddow, and Croz, the guide, were killed, Mr. Whymper and two other guides escaping. Of the four killed, Mr. Hudson's, Mr. Haddow's and Croz's remains were found, but no trace of my brother has ever been discovered. The incident I have related is an indelible reminiscence of my childhood. The accident took place on July 14th, the very day of that night to which this account refers.

"Yours faithfully,

"FLORENCE DIXIE."

This letter led to the publication on September 13th, 1905, of a letter from J. R. C., headed, "The Importance of being Accurate." It was as follows:—

"Sir,

"Lady Florence Dixie says that on the occasion of the coincidence which she relates in your issue of to-day: (1) Her brother, Lord Francis, was eighteen. (2) She and her mother were on their way to Scotland (apparently) to attend the festivities in connection with the coming-of-age of her brother, Lord Queensberry. (3) The events took place on July 14th, 1869. The last date is undoubtedly that on which Lord Francis Douglas was killed. But on that date (1) Lord Francis Douglas was twenty-two, not eighteen, having been born on February 8th, 1847. (2) Lord Queensberry was nearly twenty-four, having come of age on July 20th, 1865.

"None of Lady Florence's brothers came of age in 1869, and the above facts show that several of the circumstantial details of the story are incorrect.

"On the other hand, if the incident happened in the year when Lord Queensberry came of age, Lord Francis was eighteen; but that was four years before the accident on the Matterhorn, and the connection between the phantom voice and the death of Lord Francis fails."

Next day (September 14th, 1905) the *Daily Graphic* contained an editorial note as follows:—"Lord Archibald Douglas now telegraphs to us from Annan: 'J. R. C. is mistaken. The date on which my brother Francis was killed was July 14th, 1865.' The late Marquess of Queensberry came of age six days later, and J. R. C.'s criticism is therefore pointless."

The correspondence about this particular incident was closed by a final letter from J. R. C., apologising for his mistake and explaining how it arose. The letter, published on September 16th, 1905, was headed "An Apology," and ran as follows:—

"Sir,

"Will you permit me to apologise to Lady Florence Dixie. She did not mention the year in her letter, and I looked up a Peerage—an old one—to verify the dates. That Peerage—I have it before me as I write—has against the name of Lord Francis Douglas the words, 'Killed July 14th, 1869, in descending the Matterhorn.' That date is clearly wrong, and Lady Florence's story remains unshaken, and is corroborated by her details."

The last point requiring consideration is the character of witnesses. I have already pointed out how the evidence and judgment of trained observers must carry more weight than that of non-expert witnesses, so that in problems dealing with the so-called "physical phenomena" of spiritualism, a trained conjurer is probably the best type of witness.[1] But apart from training, a certain weight must be given to moral integrity. In a scientific case, just as much as in a court of law, doubt is apt to attach itself to the evidence of a known liar. Now, in connection with spiritualism, chairvoyance and spirit-photography, etc., so many mediums and professional occultists have been shown up as having no regard for truth, that the whole class of professional mediums are rightly and not unnaturally covered with suspicion. On the other hand the fact that a witness is eminently respectable and trustworthy does not guarantee the

[1] Conjurers, however, cannot always explain how psychic phenomena are produced, and may themselves be taken in. Thus Bellachini, the well known conjurer at Berlin, made a declaration before a notary in December, 1877, that he regarded it as impossible to explain the phenomena associated with the medium Slade by prestidigitation of any kind. And yet, not only was Slade exposed by Professor Lankester, but also slate-writing phenomena, even more wonderful than those of Slade, were produced by an amateur conjurer, Mr. S. J. Davey, after much practice. For other instances where conjurors have been ready to believe in "psychic or nerve force," *see* "Modern Spiritualism," vol. ii., p. 204.

accuracy of his evidence.[1] Consequently, when various phenomena are stated to have occurred on the authoritative guarantee of observers like Sir W. Crookes, F.R.S., the late F. W. Myers, Sir Oliver Lodge, F.R.S., Professor Richet and others, and are quoted as conclusive evidence in favour of the supernatural—(I shall myself, in the next chapter, quote one or two instances of "Psychic Force" as observed by most trustworthy and eminent scientific men)—we must always remember that moral integrity, important as it is, cannot take the place of specialised training. As an example of what I mean, I cannot do better than quote the case of W. T. Stead, the well-known journalist, whose integrity is above suspicion, but who has never had, as far as I am aware, any adequate scientific training fitting him for undertaking the difficult problems of psychical research. His training has been rather that fitting him for successful journalistic work, in which ability to recognise what will interest the public, rather than to detect the scientific accuracy of evidence, must be developed. Now, in an article in the *Fortnightly Review*, vol. xci., p. 56, 1909, entitled "Do the Dead Return?" he gives several experiences of his own, and, among others, an account of how he once paid a visit to a photographer who had the uncanny power of seeing spirits, and in whose hands even a photographic plate could be made to take an impression of an unsubstantial shadow from another world. "I had hardly taken my seat," Mr. Stead writes, "before the old man said: 'I had a great fright the other day. An old Boer came into the studio carrying a gun. He fairly

[1] The attitude of Mr. Theobald, author of "Spirit Workers in the Home Circle," towards criticism is typical of spiritualists. For after Messrs. Podmore and Hughes, in a series of letters to *Light* during 1884, had conclusively proved that he had been the victim of fraud practised by his daughter and cook, he wrote: "Such phenomena can never be received until faith in accredited narrators and reliance on the commonplace integrity of ordinarily reputable people is admitted as one of the canons of scientific attestation." (*See* "Modern Spiritualism," vol. ii. pp. 91-94.)

frightened me, so I said to him: "Go away. I don't like guns." And he went away. Now he's back again. He came in with you. He has not got his gun now, and he does not look so fierce. Shall we let him stay?' 'By all means,' I replied. 'Do you think you could get his photograph?' 'I don't know,' said the man, 'I can try.'" Mr. Stead sat down in front of the camera, and an exposure was made.[1] Before the plate was removed the photographer, at Mr. Stead's request, asked the spirit his name, or rather the photographer appeared to put a mental question and listen for a reply. Then he said: "He says his name is Piet Botha." Mr. Stead continues: "When he developed the plate, there was seen standing behind me a hirsute, tall, stalwart man, who might have been a Boer or a Moujik. I said nothing, but waited till the war came to an end and General Botha came to London. I sent the photograph to him by Mr. Fischer, who was Prime Minister of the Old Orange Free State." As a result, a Boer gentleman of the name of Wessels called on Mr. Stead shortly afterwards, and wanted to know all about the source of the photograph, and was almost incredulous on hearing Stead's story. The account continues:—"'Well,' I replied, 'I have told you how I got it, and you need not believe me if you don't like. But why are you so excited about it?' 'Why,' said he (Mr. Wessels), 'because that man was a near relative of mine. I have got his portrait hanging up in my house at home.' 'Really,' I said, 'is he dead?' 'He was the first Boer Commandant killed in the siege of Kimberley.' 'And what was his name?' 'Pietrus Johannes Botha,' he replied, 'but we always called him Piet Botha for short.'"

"I still have the portrait in my possession," adds Mr. Stead. "It has been subsequently identified by two

[1] *See* Appendix B., where the evidence for the genuineness of spirit-photography is considered at length. The seventh chapter of the second volume of Podmore's "Modern Spiritualism" is given up to the subject of spirit-photography, where the origin and history of this branch of spiritualism is fully described.

other Free Staters, who knew Piet Botha well. This at least is not a case which telepathy can explain. Nor will the hypothesis of fraud hold water. It was the merest accident that I asked the photographer to see if the spirit would give his name. No one in England, so far as I have been able to ascertain, knew that any Piet Botha ever existed."

It is this last statement which I want the reader to notice as typically illustrating how mistaken inferences or assumptions are the basis of error in psychical research. For, as a matter of fact, a portrait of Pietrus Botha was given in the weekly *Graphic* for November 4th, 1899, p. 631, with the following description :—" Portrait of the late Commandant Botha, killed near Kimberley. Commandant Botha is a Boer General, who was killed in the engagement with Colonel Kekewich's forces during the successful sortie from Kimberley."

Another example of the same type of statement, based on inadequate proof, is the assertion of the writer of articles on " Occultism and Common-Sense " in the *Westminster Gazette* for November 21st, 1907, where he is discussing the clairvoyant powers of Mrs. Piper, that :— " One could quote case after case in the Society's reports ; but in all the time Mrs. Piper has been under such rigid scrutiny, not one suspicious instance, or one pointing to normal acquisition of facts has been discovered." Yet, in the same article, the writer himself reproduces a letter from Professor Shaler to Professor James—given by me in Chapter IV.—in which Professor Shaler mentions some " distinctly suspicious features," and in addition to this there have been several suspicious features about Mrs. Piper ; as, for instance, the fact that when Professor Bowditch, the physiologist, went to see her in 1886, he was told a number of facts which applied quite well to Dr. Henry I. Bowditch, his uncle, but not to himself.[1]

Thus we see how little weight need be attached to the statement of an upright man when he guarantees that

[1] *See* " Proc. S.P.R.," vol. viii., p. 7. The genuineness of Mrs. Piper is discussed in Chapter IV. and Appendix Q.

an explanation of fraud is "impossible." That word is the bugbear of psychical literature; and whenever I come across it, it at once makes me suspect that the writer subconsciously had his doubts and tried to quiet them by the use of this word. Thus a "Manchester merchant of high respectability" writes a letter to the *Echo* of June 8th, 1871, describing a séance at which he witnessed the sudden appearance on the séance-table of Mrs. Guppy, "one of the biggest women of London," who pretended to have been brought there under the control of spirits from her home in Highbury about three miles away in a little over two minutes. The letter ends:—"The possibility of her being concealed in the room is as absurd as the idea of her acting in collusion with the media." It is sufficient commentary on this statement to point out, that, though the table and sitters were in a locked room, there was complete darkness, the séance took place at the house of two professional mediums, Messrs. Herne and Williams, and that Mrs. Guppy herself not only practised physical mediumship from an early age, but also worked with the professional mediums of her time, many of whom were exposed.[1]

[1] As Miss Nichol, before she married Mr. Guppy, she lived with Mrs. Sims, the sister of Dr. A. R. Wallace, F.R.S., who regarded some of her phenomena as "more conclusive than the flotation of Mr. Home." And yet, in his description of one séance at which "spirit-flowers" were produced, we read: "I rose up to turn on the gas, which was down to a blue point, when, just as my hand was reaching it, the medium who was close to me, cried out and started, saying that something cold and wet was thrown on her face. This caused her to tremble violently, and I took her hand to calm her, and it then struck me this was done to prevent me lighting the gas." (*Spiritual Magazine*, 1867, p. 51.) Podmore points out that her "power was stronger the fewer the witnesses, and strongest of all in an empty room." He also explains how she was never actually exposed because of social restraints, and because any tests that were imposed "were carried out by persons whose training and temper would have rendered even better devised precautions of little value." ("Modern Spiritualism," vol. ii., p. 67.)

Williams was exposed with a medium called Rita by spiritual-

An even better example is the account given by Horace Greeley in the *New York Tribune* (August, 1850), of the phenomena presented by the Fox girls, who were more or less the inventors of the rapping-system at séances, and who not only were exposed, but also confessed subsequently that they made the noises by natural means. (See "Modern Spiritualism," vol. i., pp. 184-185.)

> "Mrs. Fox and her three daughters left our city yesterday on their return to Rochester after a stay here of some weeks, during which they have freely subjected the mysterious influence, by which they seem to be accompanied, to every reasonable test, and to the keen and critical scrutiny of the hundreds who have chosen to visit them, or whom they have been invited to visit. The rooms which they occupied at the hotel have been repeatedly searched and scrutinised; they have been taken without an hour's notice into houses they had never before entered. They have been all unconsciously placed on a glass surface concealed under the carpet in order to interrupt electric vibrations; they have been disrobed by a committee of ladies appointed without notice, and insisting that neither of them should leave the room until the investigation had been made, etc., etc.; yet we believe no one to this moment pretends that he has detected either of them in producing or causing the rappings; nor do we think any of their contemners has invented a plausible theory to account for the production of these sounds, nor the singular intelligence which (certainly at times) has seemed to be manifested through them. . . . Whatever may be the origin or the cause of the rappings, the ladies in whose presence they occur do not make them. We tested

ists at Amsterdam in 1878. On him were found "a dirty black beard with brown silk ribbon, and several yards of very dirty muslin—the simple ingredients which represented the spiritual make-up of the repentant pirate John King—together with another bottle of phosphorised oil, a bottle of scent, and a few minor properties." ("Modern Spiritualism," vol. ii., p. 111.)

this thoroughly, and to our entire satisfaction." (Quoted in the "Spiritual Philosopher," vol. i., p. 39.)

Similarly, it is equally futile for even eminent psychical researchers to guarantee the integrity of psychic subjects or sensitives—a better expression in this connection than the objectionable word "medium." The Rev. Stainton Moses, for instance, was a clergyman and M.A. of Oxford, and for nearly eighteen years English master in University College School. Consequently, references to the phenomena exhibited by him are repeatedly coupled with some such commentary as the following paragraph from "Occultism and Common-Sense," p. 216:—"It is inconceivable that such a man as Stainton Moses—a hard-working parish priest and a respected schoolmaster—should deliberately have entered upon a course of trickery for the mere pleasure of mystifying a small circle of acquaintances. The whole course of his previous life, his apparently sincere religious feeling, all combine to contradict such a supposition. Neither is it credible that such a petty swindler would have carried out his deceptions to the end and have left behind fresh problems, the elucidation of which his eyes could never behold." How fallacious such an attitude is may be gathered from the following summary of his séances as given by Podmore ("Modern Spiritualism," vol. ii., p. 286):—

"Such in brief were the works of the Rev. William Stainton Moses. It remains to construct, if we can, an intelligible conception of the man. It seems to me clear, as I have tried to show, that there is nothing in the nature of either the physical or the mental phenomena described to require the operation of any supernormal agency. And in default of any sufficient evidence from other sources that physical manifestations of this kind are ever due to such hypothetical agencies, it seems reasonable to conclude that all the marvels reported at the séances were, in fact, produced by the medium's own hands: that it was he who tilted the table and produced the raps, that the

scents, the seed pearls, and the Parian statuettes were brought into the room in his pockets; and that the spirit lights were, in fact, nothing more than bottles of phosphorised oil. Nor would the feats described have required any special skill on the medium's part. With the exception of the spirit lights—the preparation of which in the circle as constituted probably involved little risk—the things done are all such as tricky children and novices generally have practised for generations past on their credulous friends. I doubt if this Moses could have competed with Jannes and Jambres."

In his "Newer Spiritualism," p. 162, Podmore also writes:—"It is not merely possible, then, that a trance medium will, when opportunity serves, avail himself of any normal means to achieve the end aimed at by the entranced intelligence; historical precedents indicate that it is probable that he will do so. And the lives of Stainton Moses and X + Y = Z (the Rev. C. B. Sanders) show us that an automatist may habitually employ what in other circumstances would be called dishonest methods in order to impress his friends with a belief in his marvellous powers; may all the time escape detection in making the necessary preparations; and may thus continue to enjoy, and possibly to deserve, an unblemished reputation in his normal life." [1]

So important is the subject, that I must give some more examples of the use of the words, "impossible," "inconceivable" and the like. In the next chapter will be described at some length the experiences of Professor Richet with a Mademoiselle Marthe B., in whose presence the spirit of an Algerian gentleman, named Bien Boa, was able to materialise; but, strangely enough, his

[1] In Appendix C is given another quotation from Podmore, showing how easy it was for Moses to escape detection, and describing an occasion on which he spilt a bottle of phosphorised oil, which had been masquerading as a "spirit-light."

features were exactly like those of Mademoiselle B., if she had attached a coarse moustache to her upper lip. There are other features of the case strongly suggestive of fraud, and yet Professor Richet bases his belief in the phenomena very largely on the fact that "to suppose that Marthe, the daughter of an officer, and the fiancée of the General's son, should concert with a negress and a palmist to practise an odious deception on General and Madame Noel for twelve months, is absurd. For it could not be a matter of unconscious fraud. . . . Such a complot so skilfully carried on would be impossible."[1] ("Annals of Psychical Science," vol. ii., p. 234, 1905.)

Of an allied nature is the statement made by Sir Oliver Lodge, prefacing his description of some experiments in thought transference with two Austrian ladies, of whose *bona fides* he was satisfied, although, as he says, they

[1] A particularly painful exposure of a medium called Miss Showers occurred at the house of Serjeant Cox on April 2nd, 1874. For Miss Showers was the daughter of a general; but this did not stop her from collaborating with their servant to mystify her widowed mother with whom she was then living at Teignmouth. From moving tables and performing various practical jokes she developed into a regular medium, who exhibited materialisations at her séances. At the séance in question a spirit appeared as usual in the aperture of the materialisation cabinet, the curtains of which Serjeant Cox's daughter tried to open wider. In the spirit's struggles to prevent this, the head-dress fell off and revealed the spirit's head as that of Miss Showers. Serjeant Cox's own explanation was that the medium was entranced and unconscious of her impersonation of the spirit. But he could not explain the awkward fact that Miss Showers had introduced into the cabinet some white drapery with which to clothe the spirit form. (*See* "Modern Spiritualism," vol. ii., p. 104.)

A good example of an action apparently without an adequate motive was furnished by Lady Florence Dixie, when she asserted that she had been attacked by two ruffians, dressed up as women, outside a wood near Windsor. The subsequent investigations of the police led them to believe that she had fabricated the whole story. This fact should be borne in mind in estimating the value of the story already given in the text *à propos* of the death of Lord Francis Douglas. (*See The Times* for March 19th, 1883, p. 6, and for March 30th, p. 9, as well as intermediate numbers.)

were " adepts " at the so-called " willing-game," which is admittedly done by trickery or by muscle-reading.

For after saying :—" Contact seemed essential to the transfer. Very slight contact was sufficient, for instance, through the backs of the knuckles ; but directly the hands were separated, even though but a quarter of an inch, the phenomena ceased—re-appearing again directly contact was established," and also :—" It is perfectly obvious how strongly this dependence on contact suggests the idea of a code ; and I have to admit at once that this flaw prevents this series of observations from having any value as a test case, or as establishing *de novo* the existence of the genuine power," he thinks the experiments are worth recording, because—to finish the last paragraph quoted—" My record only appeals to those who on other grounds have accepted the general possibility of thought transference, and who therefore need not feel unduly strained when asked to credit my assertion that unfair practices were extremely unlikely ; and that, apart from this moral conviction, there was a sufficient amount of internal evidence derived from the facts themselves to satisfy me that no code was used. The internal evidence of which I was thinking was : (1) the occasionally successful reproduction of nameless drawings ; (2) the occasional failure to get any clue to an object or drawing with a perfectly simple and easily telegraphed name ; (3) the speed with which the guesses were often made." (" The Survival of Man," p. 61.)

Other examples are the testimonies given by scientific men to Eusapia Palladino. Thus Podmore says *à propos* of sittings she had with Sir Oliver Lodge, F. W. Myers, and Professor Richet at the latter's house in the Île Roupard in 1894 :—

" Dr. Hodgson proceeded to analyse the descriptions given of the chief feats, and suggested explanations

of some which had puzzled the investigators at the time. In his view all that had been described could be accounted for on the assumption that Eusapia could get a hand or foot free.

"F. W. H. Myers, Sir O. Lodge and Professor Richet each replied at length to Hodgson's criticisms. Each severally mentioned that they were fully aware of the danger referred to, and that, in fact, though it had not been thought necessary to make continual statements to that effect in the notes, the hand and feet were so held as to make fraud of the kind suggested impossible. Richet's assertions on this point were the most emphatic, and, as coming from an investigator who had himself been the first to draw attention to the unsatisfactory nature of the control usually permitted, are no doubt entitled to considerable weight. He pointed out that he had previously attended séances with Eusapia in Milan and Rome, and that forty séances had been held under his direction at Carqueiranne and in the Île Roupard, extending over a period of three months. . . . And really to impute negligence on this point to Richet and his fellow investigators would almost seem equivalent to imputing imbecility." ("The Newer Spiritualism," p. 96.)

Yet next year at Cambridge Eusapia was detected in fraud at Myers' house in the very way suggested by Dr. Hodgson. And Myers, in describing the results of his sittings, said :—"I cannot doubt that we observed much conscious and deliberate fraud of a kind which must have needed long practice to bring it to its present level of skill. Nor can I find any excuse for her fraud (assuming that such excuse would be valid) in the attitude of mind of the persons, several of them distinguished in the world of science, who assisted in this inquiry. Their attitude was a fair and open one ; in all cases they showed patience, and in several cases the impression first made on their minds was distinctly favourable. With

growing experience, however, and careful observation of the precise conditions permitted or refused to us, the existence of some fraud became clear; and fraud was attempted when the tests were as good as we were allowed to make them, quite as indisputably as on the few occasions when our holding was intentionally left inadequate in order to trace more exactly the *modus operandi*. Moreover the fraud occurred both in the medium's waking state and during her real or alleged trance. I do not think there is adequate reason to suppose that any of the phenomena at Cambridge were genuine." ("Journal S. P. R.," vol. vii., p. 133.)

This illustration is now best completed by a further quotation from Podmore.

> ("The Newer Spiritualism," p. 98):—"The effect of this experience was to weaken, though not wholly to destroy, the impression produced on Myers by the phenomena witnessed in the preceding summer. Sir Oliver Lodge retained his conviction unshaken, and so did Richet and the other Continental investigators. A few years later, after witnessing some more of Eusapia's performances in Paris, Myers returned to his original allegiance, and formally avowed his renewed belief in the supernormal character of Eusapia's mediumship." [1]

But it may be said:—"Is no reliance to be placed on the opinion of scientific authorities? Do not names such as those of Crookes, Lodge, Barrett, and Wallace in England, and abroad of Richet, Zöllner, Maxwell, d'Arsonval and Lombroso, guarantee accuracy of statement and a cold critical scientific attitude in the investigation of these problems?" The answer to this question is sufficiently given in the account of a séance with the medium Florence Cook (when a spirit form called Katie King appeared), which Sir W. Crookes wrote in the following words:—

[1] *See Journal S.P.R.*, March, 1899, pp. 34, 35; and a letter from Myers to *Light*, February 18th, 1899.

> "I pass on to a séance held last night at Hackney. Katie never appeared to greater perfection, and for nearly two hours she walked about the room, conversing familiarly with those present. On several occasions she took my arm when walking, and the impression conveyed to my mind that it was a living woman by my side, instead of a visitor from the other world, was so strong that the temptation to repeat a certain celebrated experiment became almost irresistible." (This refers to an occasion on which a sitter had embraced a "spirit.") "Feeling, however, that if I had not a spirit I had at all events a lady close to me, I asked her permission to clasp her in my arms, so as to be able to verify the interesting observations which a bold experimentalist has recently somewhat verbosely recorded. Permission was graciously given, and I accordingly did—well, as any gentleman would do under the circumstances." [1]

Could one want a better example of an unscientific attitude in a scientific investigator? The fact of the matter is that scientific men, who are accustomed to accurate laboratory conditions and instruments, which do not lie or give rise to error—at any rate consciously—

[1] There is no doubt that at séances on March 29th, and May 21st, 1871, the figure of "Katie" was not that of the medium Miss Cook; but these two séances took place in Miss Cook's own home in Hackney on her own invitation, in order to afford to Sir W. Crookes a final proof of materialisation, as up till then, in séances held at Sir W. Crookes' house or elsewhere, "Katie" had never indisputably been seen simultaneously with the medium, and in the photographs of "Katie" it had been remarked that there was an unmistakable likeness to Miss Cook herself. Further, at these two séances the materialisation cabinet, where Sir W. Crookes saw two living figures together, was the medium's own bedroom. It is also pertinent to point out that Miss Cook was exposed at the beginning of her career by a Mr. William Hipp, and a second time on December 9th, 1873, by Mr. Volckman (who afterwards married Mrs. Guppy), and a third time, at the end of her career in January, 1880, when she had become Mrs. Corner.

The rest of Sir W. Crookes' description of the séance at Hackney is given in Appendix D.

are no match for the subtle degrees of deception practised by media like Home, Moses and Eusapia. Because the latter appear in their daily intercourse to be reliable, honest persons, the former cannot admit of their being on other occasions the authors of fraud. The soul of truthfulness themselves, they are quite unaware how impossible it is to postulate that anything done by that complex living mechanism, man, is absurd or inconceivable.[1] On the other hand they are somewhat to blame when they publish observations, bearing the imprimatur of their great names and so likely to bias the public, which do not conform to their own standards of scientific proof. Thus, Sir W. Crookes showed his appreciation of the necessity for a record of observations independent of human fallibility, when he wrote in his "Researches in Spiritualism," p. 6 :—

"The Spiritualist tells of rooms and houses being

[1] The reader, interested in knowing of what apparently sane human beings are capable, should read Podmore's account of how the American spiritualist leader, Spear, and his disciples constructed a machine of copper and zinc, the motive power of which was to be an indwelling spiritual principle; and how a respectable married lady endured pangs of parturition for two hours, followed for some weeks by a process analogous to that of nursing, by which it was claimed that the life of the "new-born child," the "physical Saviour" of the race, was cherished and sustained. ("Modern Spiritualism," vol. i., p. 298.)

On the subject of fraudulent mediums, Podmore makes some excellent observations, from which I extract the following: "It seems not unreasonable to conclude therefore that mediums . . . have certain common characteristics . . . and that all alike, again in accordance with the spiritualist contention, may be to some extent unconscious of their actions, and therefore not fully responsible for them. In modern terminology the medium, whether 'physical' or 'impressional,' is probably a person of unstable nervous equilibrium, in whom the control normally exercised by the higher brain-centres is liable on slight provocation to be abrogated, leaving the organism, as in dream or somnambulism, to the guidance of impulses, which, in a state of unimpaired consciousness, would have been suppressed before they could have resulted in action." ("Modern Spiritualism," vol. ii., p. 76.)

shaken even to injury by superhuman power. The man of science merely asks for a pendulum to be set vibrating when it is in a glass case and supported on solid masonry.

"The Spiritualist tells of heavy articles of furniture moving from one room to another without human agency. But the man of science has made instruments which will divide an inch into a million parts, and he is justified in doubting the accuracy of the former observations if the same force is powerless to move the index of his instrument one poor degree.

"The Spiritualist tells of flowers with the fresh dew on them, of fruit, and living objects being carried through closed windows, and even solid brick walls. The scientific investigator naturally asks that an additional weight (if it be only the thousandth part of a grain) be deposited on one pan of his balance when the case is locked, and the chemist asks for the thousandth of a grain of arsenic to be carried through the sides of a glass tube in which pure water is hermetically sealed."

And yet these conditions were not fulfilled in his experiments with Home and a balance, as a result of which he felt able to announce in the *Quarterly Journal of Science* (July, 1871) that he had succeeded in experimentally demonstrating the existence of a hitherto unknown force and had measured the effects produced. On the contrary, as Podmore says, "we are expressly told that all present guarded Home's feet and hands. It is pertinent to point out that a duty for which the whole company were collectively responsible, may well at times have been intermitted. Moreover Dr. Huggins and Mr. Crookes had to watch the balance also, and Mr. Crookes had to take notes." In fact the defect of these and nearly all psychical experiments is the absence of exactly that element of proof for which I showed the necessity in the last chapter, namely, the repetition of experiments under approxi-

mately identical conditions. For in these same experiments with Home and a balance Sir W. Crookes himself admits this weakness, when he writes :—" The experiments I have tried have been very numerous, but owing to our imperfect knowledge of the conditions which favour or oppose the manifestation of this force, to the apparently capricious manner in which it is exerted, and to the fact that Mr. Home himself is subject to unaccountable ebbs and flows of the force, it has but seldom happened that a result obtained on one occasion could be subsequently confirmed and tested with apparatus specially contrived for the purpose." [1]

The clue to the mistakes made by scientific men in experiments like the above is clearly given by a sentence in Myers' report of his experiments with Eusapia, already

[1] Podmore's commentary on this case is as follows: " The real significance of this statement is that Home—a practised conjurer, as we are entitled to assume—was in a position to dictate the conditions of the experiment. By the simple device of doing nothing when the conditions were unfavourable, he could insure that the light (gas in the present instance) was such and so placed, the apparatus so contrived, and the sitters so disposed, as to suit his purpose, and that, in the actual experiment, the attention of the investigators would necessarily be concentrated on the wrong points." (" Modern Spiritualism," vol. ii., p. 240.) However, in suggesting that Home was a clever trickster, it must be admitted that he was never exposed, except on a doubtful occasion in 1855 (*Journal S.P.R.*, July, 1889), for which fact Podmore accounts as follows: " Mainly, no doubt, it was due to Home's peculiar position as a non-professional medium, to the fact that his sitters were, in a sense, his guests, and that he himself in effect selected those before whom he would consent to perform. Again, we cannot exclude the possibility that there were cases in which imposture was actually detected by persons who refrained, out of consideration for the feelings of their friends, or from the fear of ridicule, from making their discovery public" (*loc. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 231). The ebb and flow of Home's ' psychic force ' reminds one of Mrs. de Morgan's servant, Jane, of whom we are told that her powers were extremely uncertain, so that with most persons she failed altogether, although with her credulous mistress she was generally successful. (*See* " From Matter to Spirit," pp., 19-22.) Podmore sarcastically calls it " another instance of exclusiveness " !

quoted, namely, "fraud was attempted when the tests were as good *as we were allowed to make them.*" The italics are mine; for these words indicate that where the conditions of an experiment are dictated, the training of a conjurer in addition to that of a laboratory experimentalist is required.[1] Further, when a number of men take part in a psychical research and are making observations in common, not only are they likely, as Podmore pointed out, to relax their individual vigilance, but also they create an atmosphere of good faith, and unconsciously suggest to each other that they are observing genuine phenomena. For, as M. Gustave le Bon has proved with illustrations from the epidemic delusions of history, a collective hallucination very easily spreads throughout a crowd, which is always less critical and more credulous than the average of the individuals composing it.[2]

[1] Perhaps the most interesting aspect of spiritualism is not so much the difficulty of explaining the phenomena recorded, as the credulity of distinguished and clever men. Among Fellows of the Royal Society, in addition to Wallace, Crookes, and Lodge already referred to, may be mentioned Major Moor and Dr. Clanny, both of whom, in recording psychical phenomena which they had investigated, almost boast that they took no precautions against trickery. (*See* "Modern Spiritualism," vol. i., pp. 29-32.) Lastly, I must not omit the name of that most distinguished mathematician, Professor de Morgan, who pinned his faith on the maxim "Now things which have happened are manifestly possible; for if they had been impossible, they would not have happened" (*τὰ δὲ γενόμενα φανερὸν ὅτι δυνατά οὐ γάρ ἐγένετο, εἰ ἦν ἀδύνατα*, Aristotle). But the effect of this maxim is rather spoilt when Podmore tells us "in the single illustration of the practical working of his principle which he (Professor de Morgan) allows himself to give, it is unfortunately obvious that the homilist has been gulled by a clever adventuress (Mrs. Hayden)" (*loc. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 145). *See also* Appendix E.

[2] *See* Gustave Le Bon's "Psychologie des Foules," Paris, 1895. He quotes a good illustration of collective hallucination in the following incident. A French frigate, *La Belle Poule*, was searching for a missing consort, when the whole crew in full daylight saw a raft and boats crowded with men. But on approaching the object, it turned out to be merely some floating

The conclusions then to which we have come in this chapter are, *first*: that the only satisfactory type of witness is one who combines integrity with expert knowledge, and who never makes assertions based on mere assumption and unverified inference; *second*, that all assertions should be verifiable by documentary evidence made, if possible, at the time of the experience; *third*, that the respectability neither of the witnesses nor of the psychic subject of an experiment should influence us to any great extent, for, to quote G. H. Lewes's words *à propos* of table-turning, "in the delicate and difficult question of science *paroles d'honneur* have a quite inappreciable weight. We may, therefore, set aside the respectability of the witnesses, and, with full confidence in their integrity, estimate the real value of their assertions, which amounts to this: they were not conscious of pushing."[1]

branches of trees. Other examples of collective hallucinations are given in "Modern Spiritualism," vol. ii., p. 252, and an excellent recent case in "The Newer Spiritualism," pp. 83, 84. The reader interested in the subject would do well to read recent articles in the *Revue Scientifique*, by M. Le Bon (March 26th, and April 2nd, 1910). In the next chapter will also be found an excellent example from New Zealand, which I have quoted to illustrate the mental atmosphere of a table-turning séance. The narrator of the incident, a cold-blooded, reckless type of man, tells how the presence of a crowd of excited and credulous Maoris made him half ready to give way to belief in the genuineness of what he knew to be a piece of imposture.

[1] *Prolegomena*, § 22. The quotation is taken from a section analysing the phenomena of table-turning, which is given in Appendix F.

SPIRITUALISM, OCCULTISM, PSYCHIC FORCE, ETC.

"Error arises in the substitution of Inference for Presentation. . . . The large interfusion of Inference in the simplest acts of perception has long been recognised; and, as I have said elsewhere, what is called a 'fact,' and held to be indisputable because it is a 'fact,' is in reality a bundle of inferences, some or all of which may be false. . . . The Radical Antithesis is not between Fact and Theory, but between verified and unverified Inferences. . . . The same statement may be either a fact or a theory without any change in its evidence." (G. H. Lewes, *Prolegomena*, § 15.)

CHAPTER III

Spiritualism, Occultism, Psychic Force, etc.

If human evidence in the historical as opposed to the scientific use of the word were reliable, there could be no doubt of the truth of a supernatural or psychic force being accepted as the explanation of some, if not all, of the phenomena occurring in spiritualism, occultism, etc. For one could cite the most remarkable occurrences —quite inexplicable by any known or natural force, if it be assumed that all the facts and conditions of the case are known—on the testimony of serious, upright, and sometimes even distinguished scientific men, whose evidence in a court of law would be accepted, and rightly so, as unimpeachable. One of the most striking examples of this which I have come across is the following "psychic" experience recorded by Mr. Serjeant Cox in his book entitled, "The Mechanism of Man" (vol. ii., p. 454, 1879 ed.) :—

Experiment XIV.

"At the residence of Mr. Walter Crookes. The experimentalists present were Mr. Crookes, F.R.S., Mr. F. Galton, F.R.S., Mr. Walter Crookes, and myself. Mr. D. D. Home and two ladies completed the party. The place was a double drawing-room, separated by a sideboard and a curtain. The psychic was taken by us into the smaller room, and being seated in a chair, his wrists were tightly bound with copper wire, and fastened with wire to the back of the chair. His feet were then bound by the ankles in the same manner to the legs and rungs of the chair, and the

chair itself was fastened by wire to the grate. The wires were then soldered at the fastenings with melted solder, procured by us, and then he was pronounced by the scientists who had secured him to be absolutely immovable by any human power without cutting all the wires. His person thus bound was then enveloped in a dressing-gown, the sleeves of which were sewn together, inclosing him as in a sack. Thus was he placed wired to the fire-grate at the distance of eight feet from the curtain dividing the rooms. He had no friend nor confederate. He came to the house alone, in a cab, wearing the ordinary evening dress. Having secured the door with lock and seals, and also sealed the window, to be sure that no aid could come from without, leaving him in total darkness, we went into the front room, which was fully lighted with gas, and seated ourselves before the curtain.

In four minutes a bell that had been previously placed upon the table far from the imprisoned psychic was rung violently. Then a footstool, and then a chair, and then successively the greater portion of the movable furniture of the room in which the psychic sat, were passed through the curtain into our room. Presently the curtain was partially drawn and exhibited a man, dressed in the fashion of a sailor, but whose features resembled exactly those of the psychic, and whom we all were satisfied *was* the psychic. He stood there, leaning over the sideboard, talking to us for more than half an hour, addressing each of us by name and freely answering our questions. He was brisk at repartee. The tone of his voice and the manner of speaking were the same as all must have noticed in somnambules, who act with such abnormal ability whatever character is suggested to them. One instance will suffice. I said: "Are you substantial, or only a shape?" "I am as solid as you are," was the answer. "Have you blood, and spittle and sweat?" "Yes," he said, "will you trust your finger in my mouth?" "Certainly." "Put it in

then." He opened his jaws, and I fearlessly thrust in my finger. The tongue was warm and moist, the teeth were solid and sharp, for he gave me a bite that made me cry out with pain. Having held me thus for nearly a minute, he let me go, and with a loud laugh said, "Do you call that psychic force, serjeant?" I was compelled to acknowledge the presence of a powerful physical force. Upon the table in the room where we sat was a large iron ring, manufactured for us for experimental purposes. He asked me if I should like to have the ring put upon my arm. None of us had witnessed this feat. I readily assented. "Give me your hand then." He took my right hand. "Now hand me the ring." I gave it to him with my left hand. He pressed it with some force against my arm, and in an instant it was hanging upon it. *How* it was done I cannot even conjecture. Our hands had not parted, at least *consciously* to myself. The ring was pressed against my arm at the upper part near the shoulder. It was a momentary act, done with a touch. It was our own ring of solid iron, half an inch in diameter. I carried it upon my arm back to the table, and we examined it to be sure that it was the same ring. We now went into the other room. The psychic was as we had left him, only in a state of unconsciousness. The wires were upon all his limbs, uncut, the solder perfect, the chair bound to the grate, the dressing-gown upon him. The door was locked, and the seals on door and window unbroken."

It will be noticed that the phenomena recorded in the above case are given on the evidence of Sir William Crookes, F.R.S., the noted chemist; Mr. Galton, F.R.S., the well-known authority in the domain of travel and ethnology; and, lastly, of Mr. Walter Crookes and Mr. Serjeant Cox, both respected, successful men in their professions. So good, indeed, is the evidence that one may appear, even to oneself, as unnecessarily sceptical, if one is not

convinced of the supernatural nature of the phenomena. But if we keep prominently before our minds the liability a man runs of being deceived in an ordinary piece of scientific research and the consequent necessity of a scientific standard of truth in research problems of whatever kind, we shall be inclined to ask how far the conditions demanded by this standard have been fulfilled, before we give expression to belief in a supernatural explanation of the phenomena. The *first point* to be discussed is the question whether these witnesses, eminent in their own respective lines of knowledge, are quite such exceptionally good witnesses for the research in question as at first sight they appear. The research is one dealing with the operations either of some supernatural agency or of some tricky and distinctly material human agent. If the latter, there can be no question of the cleverness of the performer, even to an extent which appears to an ordinary man as quite impossible and inexplicable. But then the ordinary man, and even the eminent scientific man, has not the training or experience to make him aware of what can be performed by practised conjurers and finished professors of deception. And it is a remarkable fact, that those who have had this training —viz., professional conjurers, of whom Mr. Maskelyne[1]

[1] This year (1911) Maskelyne & Devant have included in their performance an item illustrating how easily mediums allowed the use of a cabinet, a separate room, or a curtained recess, can escape from almost any knots which amateur spectators are likely to use in binding and securing them with ropes. For an account of Maskelyne's imitations of the feats of Mr. Fay and the Davenport Brothers, *see* Appendix G.

Mr. Podmore points out *à propos* of slate-writing ("Modern Spiritualism," Bk. IV., chap. 2) that so skilled were the tricks of Slade and Eglinton that the only way of demonstrating, that sleight-of-hand was the probable explanation, was for an amateur conjurer, Mr. S. J. Davey, by dint of incessant practice, to equal or even surpass their feats. In fact, some spiritualists were so much impressed by Mr. Davey's consummate art that they insisted he was a medium, and "that in imputing all his performances to 'trick' he was deceiving the Society and the public." (Letter from Dr. A. R. Wallace, F.R.S., printed in the *Journal S.P.R.*, March, 1891.)

is an eminent and distinguished example—are conspicuously sceptical about giving a supernatural explanation to the performances of mediums. Consequently, having no expert training myself, I should be much more impressed by the evidence of a professional conjurer than by that of the most eminent scientific men. And if Mr. Maskelyne in particular professed himself convinced of the genuineness of this class of performance, I should say it was contrary to reasonable commonsense to remain sceptical.

Secondly, the phenomena were produced under conditions which were, in many respects, unscientific. The medium was left alone in a darkened room with no one to observe him. And a still more important objection to admitting a supernatural explanation of the phenomena recorded by Mr. Cox is the fact that the phenomena constituted a single experiment, and there was no attempt at repetition, although this was not an experiment of such a nature that repetition was impossible. Therefore, the most favourable attitude, that can rationally be adopted in this particular case, is one of agnosticism.

Thirdly, the consideration, that these phenomena took place through the co-operation of a medium, inclines the mind to doubt. For mediums by now have an unenviable reputation for dishonesty, so often have they been convicted of deception. As regards Mr. Home, in particular, it is true that never in the whole course of his life was he detected or exposed. But Mr. Podmore, who, having been secretary of the S.P.R. and joint author of "Phantasms of the Living," was well versed in these matters, makes it clear in his "History of Spiritualism" (vol. ii., bk. iv., cc. 3 and 4), that he has no doubt that some, if not all, of Home's displays were mere conjuring tricks, although he admits that Home was never detected.[1] Among other reasons for this opinion,

[1] Mr. Podmore, in his last book, says: "Under the circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that Home was never convicted of trickery. He could, of course, in his capacity as distinguished guest, not only select his sitters, but appoint their place at the

he emphasises the fact that it was only in the early part of his life, when he was performing before people distinctly less scientific and critical than those he convinced in the latter part of his career, that he produced the phenomenon of tilting up a table covered with black cloth without the objects placed thereon falling off, as the table approached the vertical. This phenomenon could, of course, be produced by the simple trick of attaching black thread to the objects in question and holding them in place in a darkened room. Such a trick would obviously be liable to detection before suspicious witnesses; therefore it is easy to understand on this explanation of the phenomenon why Home never repeated it after the beginning of his career. But if the explanation of the phenomenon were the utilisation of some psychic force, it is quite unintelligible why Home never repeated this striking experiment after he had been taken up by scientific patrons.

Lastly, Mr. Serjeant Cox showed himself on some other occasions a somewhat credulous and uncritical observer, distinctly biassed in favour of the medium, as in the case of Miss Showers already referred to, so that we cannot be certain that his account of the séance records accurately what really occurred, and that the precautions taken against fraud were as stringent as he implies.

I have now dealt with one particular instance, the best one I know, of the supposed operation of psychic force, and shown how little reason there is for being convinced of a supernatural explanation of the phenomena in question. And a similar line of reasoning applies to all other instances of an allied nature. Therefore I see no object in discussing this question of psychic force any more or giving further detailed examples. However, before leaving the subject, I should like to say a word or two about mediums in general.

Assuming that mediums, such as Home, are possessed

table, and the ladies, who were usually chosen to sit on either hand of him, would as soon have suspected their own husbands or sons." ("The Newer Spiritualism," p. 44.)

of some psychic force which the vast majority of human beings only possess in the germ, it is quite easy to understand that this force might vary in its intensity from time to time, and that a professional medium might consequently find himself unable to perform some experiment which at other times he would have no difficulty in bringing off successfully. And if he considered his reputation at stake, he might under these circumstances accomplish by trickery what at other times he could bring about "supernaturally" by psychic force.[1] Therefore the mere fact that a medium has been detected in resorting to conjuring tricks does not theoretically prove

[1] The following passages from "The Newer Spiritualism" are very characteristic of Podmore's attitude on the subject of "physical phenomena." He, indeed, in his numerous works on psychical subjects, makes it clear that he regards the occurrence of all physical phenomena as proof of conscious or unconscious trickery on the part of any medium: "It is not easy to see how simple trickery could explain some of the phenomena attested, such as the last incident (a fire ordeal) quoted from Sir W. Crookes' contemporary notes, or the elongation of Home's person by candle-light, as described by the Master of Lindsay. We almost seem to be driven, as Mr. Fielding and his colleagues have suggested in their report on Eusapia's manifestations, to accept the alternatives of a new force or some form of sense-deception." (a collective hallucination). . . . "As regards the first alternative, it may perhaps be admitted that a force which was capable of depressing a balance, playing an accordion, distributing flowers, and unscrewing the canopy of an oriental idol, might conceivably be capable of carrying a slenderly built man round the room. But it is a little difficult to suppose that the same force could stretch his bodily frame to the extent of a foot or so, or could render not only his own skin but that of his elected witnesses immune alike to the pain and to the physical effects of fire. And if we add all the other phenomena vouched for by competent witnesses, including Sir W. Crookes himself, raps, spirit-lights, even semi-material mimicries of the complete human form, we must suppose—that is, if we allow ourselves to be guided by terrestrial analogies at all—that we have to deal, not with one new force, but with many. We are surely not justified in doing more than casting a glance at such a possibility before we have at any rate attempted to find a cheaper solution elsewhere." . . . "We don't quite see how some of the things were done,

that he has never possessed psychic force. But, note! this is only a theoretical argument. I have given it, as I believe it blinds the minds of some quite acute people to the practical question, "What proof is there that psychic force exists at all?" As I have shown, there is no convincing proof. And now when we do not assume the existence of psychic force, the mere fact that reputed possessors of it have repeatedly been exposed resorting to trickery [1] at once lends probability to the suggestion

and we leave the subject with an almost painful sense of bewilderment. But to say that because we cannot understand some of the feats, therefore they must have been due to spirits or psychic force, is merely an opiate for the uneasiness of suspended judgment, a refuge from the trouble of thinking." ("The Newer Spiritualism," pp. 80, 81, and 86.)

[1] A complete list of media who have been exposed since 1850 might include almost a hundred names; but in default of that, a reference to the following well-known media will show the reader how common exposure has been. The numbers after the names refer to the pages in "Modern Spiritualism," vol. ii., where the respective exposures are described: Messrs. Bly, Colchester and Foster (52); the Davenport Brothers (60); Mrs. Fay (84); "Dr." Slade (89); Florence Cook (103 and 157); Miss Showers (104); M. Firman (106); Messrs. Bastian and Taylor (107); Miss Wood (108); Williams and Rita (111); Hudson (118); M. Buguet (121); Madame Blavatsky (175); Eglinton (206); Eusapia Palladino (202). In addition, the exposures of Monck and the Fox girls have already been referred to in the text.

Huxley's remarks on media are worth recalling here: "They (the believers in spiritualism) freely admit that not only the media, but the spirits whom they summon, are sadly apt to lose sight of the elementary principles of right and wrong; and they triumphantly ask, How does the occurrence of occasional impostures disprove the genuine manifestations (that is to say, all those which have not yet been proved to be impostures or delusions)? And in this they unconsciously plagiarise from the churchman, who just as freely admits that many ecclesiastical miracles may have been forged, and asks with calm contempt, not only of legal proofs, but of common-sense probability, 'Why does it follow that none are to be supposed genuine?' I must say, however, that the spiritualists, so far as I know, do not venture to outrage right reason so boldly as the ecclesiastics. They do not sneer at 'evidence,' nor repudiate the requirement of legal proof.

that all their performances may be explained by conjuring tricks and not by psychic force.

> A very good case in point is that of Archdeacon Colley, who quite genuinely believed in the spiritualistic nature of the appearances produced by a medium named Monck, although the said medium had been detected in fraud the year before and sentenced in a court of law (October, 1876) to three months' imprisonment as a rogue and vagabond.
>
> So much reverence had the Archdeacon for the "supernatural powers" of this gentleman, that he had no hesitation in living with him on the most intimate terms, in fact sharing his bedroom.[1]

In fact, there can be no doubt that the spiritualists produce better evidence for their manifestations than can be shown either for the miraculous death of Arius, or for the Invention of the Cross." ("Essays," vol. v., p. 341.)

[1] During April, 1906, there was a controversy upon Spiritualism in *The Daily Telegraph*. One of the letters contained the statement that "the late Rev. H. R. Haweis, writing in the press, stated that before a Committee of the Society for Psychical Research, Mr. Maskelyne, on being asked as to whether he could reproduce the phenomena (said to be exhibited by certain sensitives) in a private room, replied in the negative, adding that it would require three tons of machinery for the purpose." Mr. Maskelyne wrote a letter to refute this oft-repeated lie, pointing out that he possessed a letter from the Rev. H. R. Haweis himself, apologising for the falsehood. This refutation greatly annoyed certain spiritualists, and then Archdeacon Colley—who had written a pamphlet to prove the probability of Christ's resurrection, citing certain experiences of his own with the medium Monck in support of the supernatural—responded in a public and controversial way, challenging Maskelyne to reproduce the same phenomena as those of Monck, and offering to pay £1000 if he could do so "any way, anywhere, at any time, as a conjurer." This led Mr. Maskelyne to include in his entertainment at St. George's Hall an item illustrating how easy it was to produce the appearance of a materialised spirit coming out of a medium's body. Also he explained the *raison d'être* of the item by a little speech in which he threw doubt on the question whether Mr. Colley had any right to the title of Archdeacon. This led to a libel action, in which the Archdeacon won small damages on the technical ground that he undoubtedly had the right to use the

That trickery is the explanation of " physical phenomena " is even better illustrated by the career of Eusapia Palladino, the most famous of all the mediums exhibiting " psychic force " during the last twenty years. She was born and bred in the slums of Naples and was married in early life to a travelling conjuror. It was in the year 1892 at Milan that she was first investigated, and since then she has been continuously quoted as the possessor *par excellence* of genuine psychic force. For she has been conspicuously fortunate in still retaining the faith of many eminent scientific men—of Professor Lombroso in particular—in spite of several exposures, those best known to me being that which occurred at Cambridge in 1895 during sittings with Professor Sidgwick, Mr. F. W. Myers and Dr. Hodgson (*Journal S.P.R.*, vol. vii., p. 133), and the recent one at New York during sittings with Professor Münsterberg in December, 1909.[1] After the Cambridge exposure the Council of the S.P.R. recognised that she was not a trustworthy subject for experimenting with and consequently she has not been investigated again in England. But during the next twelve years so successfully did she impose on numerous

title of Archdeacon ; but the facts revealed at the trial of the past career of the medium Monck and of his relations to Mr. Colley substantiated all that Mr. Maskelyne had said about the Archdeacon's want of critical intelligence. A full account of the trial and of the evidence, illustrating in a most instructive way the methods of spiritualists, was given in *The Times* of April 25th, 26th, 27th, 30th, and May 1st, 1907, extracts from which I have reproduced in Appendix H.

[1] The whole subject of Eusapia is most luminously treated by Podmore in his " Newer Spiritualism " (cc. 3 and 4). For a shorter account dealing with other fraudulent modern mediums, as well as Eusapia, the reader is referred to an article by the conjurer, Mr. William Marriott, in the May number of *Pearson's Magazine*, 1910, where on p. 508—after describing how a medium called Bailey was brought over by Professor Reichel from Australia to Europe at considerable expense—he says : " Yet in the face of this fiasco—which had cost him at least £200—Professor Reichel writes to Bailey : ' Your deceptive mode of proceeding is all the more repugnant, as I am fully convinced that you are capable of producing genuine phenomena.' "

foreign investigators that in the autumn of 1908 the S.P.R. was induced to send out a Commission consisting of three of its members who possessed some knowledge of conjuring, to further test her claims to supernatural powers. The sittings were held in Naples at the hotel where the Commissioners were staying, and Eusapia was tested with apparent scientific precautions. In the end they reported that they were satisfied she possessed genuine psychic powers, although they only obtained striking phenomena when the illumination of the room had been reduced to a minimum. (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. xxiii. November, 1909.) One of the Commissioners, Mr. Hereward Carrington, was so much impressed that he acted more or less as her *entrepreneur* in a tour she shortly afterwards made to America. Unfortunately for him and her, she was investigated in New York by Professor Münsterberg with real scientific accuracy, which does not limit itself to so-called gentlemanly behaviour. For a man, concealed by Professor Münsterberg in the tent-like alcove behind Eusapia, caught hold in the middle of the séance of a foot which was picking up objects out of the alcove and which turned out to be attached to Eusapia, although both her feet were supposed to be securely controlled at the time by intelligent observers. At another séance two additional observers were introduced into the room while Eusapia's attention was distracted for a moment, and so they were able to lie on the floor with their eyes only a few inches away from her feet and see exactly her method of freeing a foot from the control of the observers sitting each side of her.

I now pass on to a class of phenomena included under spiritualism which do not necessarily need the intervention of a medium and of which table-turning is a well known and popular example. Table-turning in amateur circles is done in various ways, among which I select for description the following method. As soon as the table is under the influence of the circle, who have their fingers—usually in contact with one another—stretched round the edge of the table, it begins to gyrate,

apparently automatically. Questions are then put to the supposed spirit operating the table, and an answer is obtained by the rather tedious method of spelling through the alphabet and noting the letter at which the table tilts. In this way the answer is spelt out letter by letter. Now the conditions for success are chiefly three: (A) that there should be no one taking part who is profoundly sceptical; (B) that some one should be a convinced believer in the "spiritual explanation" of table-turning, usually of a neurotic temperament; (C) that the performance should be carried out in a dim light. These are just the conditions for inducing a state of auto-suggestion or hypnotism.

After a few or many minutes of sitting with outstretched fingers one or more of the sitters will become the subject of fatigue of the neuro-muscular system, encouraged by the expectancy of phenomena and by the concentration of attention not to miss the moment the table begins to move. This fatigue leads to a certain degree of tremor in the hands and probably evinces itself first in those who are the most intense believers, especially if they are of a neurotic temperament, that is have a nervous system easily excited and depressed. As the finger-tips are fixed by contact with the table, the tremor gives the feeling that the table is vibrating and in the belief that it is about to move the enthusiasts quite subconsciously push the table. The moment the table moves ever so little, the whole company, including the least enthusiastic, become the subjects of a process of auto-suggestion and aid the deception quite unconsciously by pushing. If however a profound sceptic is present he will not be the victim of this auto-hypnotic process, and by not doing his share of the pushing or by withstanding the tendency of the table to move, which is very slight at first, he will defeat the action of the others. Theoretically it is possible that spirits are the operating agency, as it is a matter which can hardly be subjected to scientific proof; but as the natural explanation which I have given, depending on the tendency of the nervous

system to develop "automatism" under conditions tending to foster auto-suggestion, is most probable, there is no reason for seeking a supernatural explanation.[1] I had some experience of table-turning in conjunction with three or four friends when I was an undergraduate at college, all of us being young and inexperienced and half inclined to believe in a spiritual agency. Being myself of rather a "suggestible" temperament I had no difficulty in getting the table to move. But in thinking the matter over afterwards I had little doubt but that I pushed the table and in a similar way quite unconsciously did my part in making the table tilt at the letter, which sometimes I was more or less expecting. In fact I and my friends were the unconscious victims of a suggestive atmosphere, and I cannot illustrate what I mean by this term better than by quoting the account given by the author of "Old New Zealand" of a spirit-raising performance witnessed by himself among the Maoris (p. 122).

> "These priests or tohunga would and do to this hour undertake to call up the spirit of any dead person, if paid for the same. I have seen many of these exhibitions, but one instance will suffice as an example. A young chief, who had been very popular and greatly respected in the tribe, had been killed in battle; and at the request of several of his nearest friends the tohunga had promised on a certain night to call up his spirit to speak to them and answer certain questions they wished to put. The priest was to come to the village of the relations and the

[1] I feel that it is almost superfluous to give this natural explanation of table-turning, since the phenomenon was analysed in such a masterly manner by G. H. Lewes (*Prolegomena*, § 22), who conclusively showed that there was no reason for seeking a supernatural explanation. His words are so much to the point that I am reproducing them in Appendix F, as the passage is too long to insert in this note. Also the reader will doubtless remember the well-known contribution of Professor Faraday to the subject, when he devised a piece of apparatus which showed that sitters could quite unconsciously push the table.

interview was to take place in a large house common to all the population. This young man had been a great friend of mine; and so the day before the event I was sent to by his relatives and told that an opportunity offered of conversing with my friend once more. I was not much inclined to bear a part in such outrageous mummery, but curiosity caused me to go. Now it is necessary to remark that this young chieftain was a man in advance of his times and people in many respects. He was the first of his tribe who could read and write; and amongst other unusual things for a native to do he kept a register of deaths and births and a journal of any remarkable events which happened in the tribe. Now this book was lost. No one could find it, although his friends had searched unceasingly for it, as it contained many matters of interest and also they wished to preserve it for his sake. I also wished to get it and had often inquired if it had been found, but had always been answered in the negative. The appointed time came, and at night we all met the priest in the large house I have mentioned. Fires were lit, which gave an uncertain, flickering light. The priest retired to the darkest corner. All was expectation, and the silence was only broken by the sobbing of the sister and other female relations of the dead man. They seemed to be and indeed were in an agony of excitement, agitation and grief. This state of things continued for a long time, and I began to feel in a way surprising to myself, as if there was something real in the matter. The heart-breaking sobs of the women and the grave, solemn silence of the men convinced me that to them at least this was a serious matter. I saw the brother of the dead man now and then wiping the tears in silence from his eyes. I wished I had not come, for I felt that any unintentional symptoms of incredulity on my part would shock and hurt the feelings of my friends extremely; and yet, whilst feeling thus, I felt myself more and more near to believing in the deception about to be

practised. The real grief and also the general undoubting faith in all around me had this effect. We were all seated on the rush-strewn floor, about thirty persons. The door was shut, the fire had burnt down, leaving nothing but glowing charcoal. The room was oppressively hot, the light was little better than darkness, and the part of the room in which the tohunga sat was now in perfect darkness. Suddenly without the slightest warning a voice came out of the darkness: 'Salutation! Salutation to you all! Salutation, salutation to you my tribe! Family, I salute you! Friends, I salute you! Friend, my pakeha friend, I salute you!' The high-handed, daring imposture was successful; our feelings were taken by storm. A cry expressive of affection and despair, such as was not good to hear, came from the sister of the dead chief, a fine, stately and really handsome woman of about twenty-five. She was rushing with both arms extended into the dark in the direction from whence the voice came. She was instantly seized round the waist, and restrained by her brother by main force till moaning and panting she lay still on the ground. At the same instant another female voice was heard from a young girl who was held by the wrists by two young men, her brothers:—'Is it you? Is it you? Truly is it you? Aue! Aue! They hold me, they restrain me, wonder not that I have not followed you, they restrain me, they watch me, but I go to you. The sun shall not rise, the sun shall not rise, aue! aue!' Here she fell insensible on the rush floor and with the sister was carried out. The remaining women were all weeping and exclaiming, but were silenced by the men, who were themselves nearly as much excited, though not so clamorous. I however did notice two old men, who sat close to me, were not in the slightest degree moved in any way, though they did not seem at all incredulous, but quite the contrary. The spirit spoke again:—'Speak to me, the tribe!

Speak to me, the family! Speak to me, the pakeha!' The pakeha however was not at the moment inclined for conversation. The deep distress of the two women, the evident belief of all around him of the presence of the spirit, 'the darkness visible,' the novelty of the scene, gave rise to a state of feeling not favourable to the conversational powers. Besides I felt reluctance to give too much apparent credence to an imposture which at the very same time I felt half ready to give way to.

"At last the brother spoke:—'How is it with you? Is it well with you in that country?' The answer came—(the voice all through, it is to be remembered, was not the voice of the tohunga, but a strange, melancholy sound like the sound of the wind blowing into a hollow vessel)—'It is well with me, my place is a good place.' The brother spoke again:—'Have you seen——and——?' (I forget the names mentioned.) 'Yes, they are all with me.' A woman's voice now from another part of the room anxiously cried out:—'Have you seen my sister?' 'Yes, I have seen her.' 'Tell her my love is great towards her, and never will cease.' 'Yes, I will tell her.' Here the woman burst into tears and the pakeha felt a strange swelling of the chest, which he could in no way account for. The spirit spoke again:—'Give my large tame pig to the priest, (the pakeha was disenchanted at once,) and my double gun.' Here the brother interrupted:—'Your gun is a mamatunga, I shall keep it.' He is also disenchanted, thought I. But I was mistaken. He believed, but wished to keep the gun his brother had carried so long. An idea now struck me that I could expose the imposture without palpable disbelief. 'We cannot find your book,' said I, 'where have you concealed it?' The answer instantly came:—'I concealed it between the tahuhu of my house and the thatch, straight over you as you go in at the door.' Here the brother rushed out; all was silence till his return.

In five minutes he came back with the book in his hand. I was beaten, but made another effort. 'What have you written in that book?' said I. 'A great many things.' 'Tell me some of them.' 'Which of them?' 'Any of them.' 'You are seeking for some information, what do you want to know? I will tell you.' Then suddenly: 'Farewell, O tribe! Farewell, my family, I go!' Here a general and impulsive cry of farewell arose from every one in the house. 'Farewell,' again cried the spirit from deep beneath the ground. 'Farewell!' again from high in the air. 'Farewell!' once more came moaning through the distant darkness of the night. 'Farewell.' I was for a moment stunned. The deception was perfect. There was a dead silence—at last. 'A ventriloquist,' said I, 'or—or perhaps the devil.'

I was fagged and confused. It was past midnight; the company broke up and I went to a house where a bed had been prepared for me. I wished to be quiet and alone; but it was fated there should be little quiet that night. I was just falling asleep, after having thought for some time on the extraordinary scenes I had witnessed, when I heard the report of a musket at some little distance, followed by the shouting of men and the screams of women. Out I rushed; I had the presentiment of some horrible catastrophe. Men were running by hastily armed. I could get no information, so went with the stream. There was bright flame beginning to spring up at a short distance, and every one appeared going in that direction. I was soon there. A house had been set on fire to make a light. Before another house, close at hand, a dense circle of human beings was formed. I pushed my way through; and there saw by the bright light of the flaming house a scene which is still fresh before me: there in the verandah of the house was an old grey-bearded man, he knelt upon one knee, and on the other he supported the dead body of the young girl, who had said she would follow the spirit

to spirit-land. The delicate-looking body from the waist upwards was bare and bloody, the old man's right arm was under her neck, the lower part of his long grey beard was dabbled with blood, his left hand was twisting his matted hair. He did not weep, he howled, and the sound was that of a heathen despair, knowing no hope. The young girl had secretly procured a loaded musket, tied a loop for her foot to the trigger, placed the muzzle to her tender breast, and blown herself to shatters. And the old man was her father and a tohunga. A calm low voice now spoke close beside me: "She has followed her Rangatira," it said. I looked round and saw the famous tohunga of the night."

In this account it will be observed that the conditions were just those calculated to counteract a spirit of calm scientific inquiry, viz., the presence of a company of already convinced believing enthusiasts expressing their emotions by groans and other cries, little or no light, suffocating heat, etc. And there is no question that similar conditions, if less pronounced, are present in all cases of successful occultism. Therefore, I will not stop here to inquire in detail into the claims of other occultists that their performances are to be regarded as evidence of a supernatural agency, and to any one inclined to believe in Madame Blavatsky, in particular, I would recommend a book called, "Isis Very Much Unveiled," by Edmund Garrett, where the author gives an account of the tricks by which she imposed upon her dupes, and proves clearly on evidence which has never been refuted, that she was an impostor, deliberately supporting her claims to supernatural powers by tricks and deceptions carefully planned, and carried out in collusion with others.[1]

[1] Mr. Hodgson was sent out by the Society for Psychical Research in 1885 to India specially to investigate the phenomena and claims associated with the name of Madame Blavatsky. He made a report (*Proceedings of the S.P.R.* Pt. IX., December, 1885), indicating that she was only a common impostor. After her death, her associates fell out over the question of who

I have heard some commonsense people argue before now, that, though a natural explanation of some phenomenon was the more probable, yet the result was so striking, and had led to such remarkable consequences, that they were still believers in its being a question of supernatural guidance. This, of course, is an absolutely unscientific or unreasonable argument, as belief in a spiritual agency is quite sufficient to lead human beings into doing the most extraordinary actions, as illustrated by the lives of religious fanatics, and in the above tragic story by the suicide of the Maori girl.

Allied to belief in the spiritualistic explanation of table-turning is belief in the spiritualistic source of messages received by means of "planchette" or automatic writing. The natural explanation of these phenomena is also very similar, namely, a neurotic temperament and a state of auto-suggestion, and in the case of automatic writing there is undoubtedly a special genius for this type of performance, as authentic records exist of subjects writing independent messages with both hands at once, showing that the two halves of the brain are working independently, which at first sight may suggest to readers, who are not trained in psychology or physiology, that spiritual agencies are the operating forces.[1]

should be President of the Theosophical Society, and made charges against each other, giving the whole "show" away. A most amusing and clever account of all these facts was written by Edmund Garrett in 1894 in a small book entitled "Isis Very Much Unveiled" (Westminster Gazette Library).

[1] One of the most interesting tests to which automatic writing has ever been put was the occasion on which the message, received through the automatic writing of Mrs. Verrall and believed by her to have come from the late F. W. Myers, was compared with a message written by Mr. Myers nearly fourteen years before, and given by him in a sealed envelope to his friend Professor Oliver Lodge, who had kept it securely ever since. The two messages were compared at a special meeting of the S.P.R. (*see Journal*, vol. xii., p. 11, January, 1905), and to the disappointment of many were totally dissimilar, giving no support to a telepathic explanation of automatic writing.

In support of the view that automatic writing and planchette

This, of course, cannot be disproved, and in the next chapter I shall discuss in connection with "telepathy" what can be said in favour of the supernatural explanation. But there is nothing improbable or difficult to understand in the natural explanation.

The last subject to be dealt with in this chapter is that of ghosts and materialised spirits. The word "ghost," as popularly used, has rather a vague connotation. It connotes, on the one hand, a being that can grip you by the throat going downstairs, and, on the other hand, an object which melts away as you walk into it. But, as a result of the investigations of the Society for Psychical Research during the last thirty years—in which time it has not been able to substantiate one single ghost-story of the old-fashioned type—it is recognised now that an explanation of "sensory hallucination" must be given in all these cases (see Podmore's "Telepathic Hallucinations: the New View of Ghosts"). What is the cause of these sensory hallucinations is another matter, and it is bound up with the question of telepathy, a subject to be discussed in the next chapter.

Passing now from the subject of old-fashioned ghosts to that of modern ghosts or materialised spirits, which possess the attributes of matter, such as the power to reflect light and affect a photographic plate,[1] one feels

writing are the result of subconscious natural processes, I can quote an interesting experience of a friend of mine, who was most successful in writing with planchette. He was at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1903, and one day he was unable to remember the first line of a piece of poetry which he had previously learnt by heart and knew quite well, being able to recall it all but the first line. He then thought of experimenting with planchette to see if it would write out the forgotten line. This it did with complete success, indicating in this particular instance, at any rate, the subconscious and natural nature of "planchette writing."

[1] A committee, formed under the auspices of the *Daily Mail*, investigated the subject of spirit-photography in 1909. "Three spiritualists and three expert photographers formed the committee. The three spiritualists reported that the photographers were not in a proper frame of mind to succeed in obtaining "spirit-photographs." The photographers announced that no scrap of

on surer ground in asking for scientific proof before admitting a supernatural explanation. As none of the recorded instances that I have come across ever fulfil the conditions demanded by a scientific standard of truth, I have no hesitation in giving an explanation of fraud to all such appearances, as they are, on the one hand, entirely against probability, and, on the other hand, always necessitate the intervention of a medium. At the same time this class of case is of great interest in that exactly the same evidence is often given by enthusiastic believers in proof of a supernatural agency, as is sufficient to prove to me that a very material agent has been at work. For instance, in the case of "Archdeacon Colley versus Maskelyne," already quoted, it came out that one of the experiences which convinced the Archdeacon of the medium's supernatural powers was the following :—He saw a spirit-form evolved out of the medium's side and advance towards himself. He was then allowed to seize hold of the spirit ; and although he found he had hold of a piece of muslin wrapped round the medium's body, yet he still continued to believe (and, perhaps, to this day believes), that a genuine materialised spirit had entered the medium's body.

testimony was put before them to show that "spirit-photography" was possible. But they went further, and herein lies the feature of this particular investigation. They invited the submission to them of spirit-photographs, and having examined these critically, they report that not only did they not testify to their supernatural production, but that they bore on the face of them circumstantial evidence of the way in which they had been produced ; in other words, that the prints were not mysteries, but self-revealed fakes." (The rest of this quotation from an article in the supplement to *The Weekly Times*, of June 25th, 1909, is too long to reproduce here, but is given in Appendix B.) The whole subject of spirit-photography is also most concisely and convincingly treated by Mr. William Marriott in the August number of *Pearson's Magazine*, 1910, where it is shown that by trickery spirit-photographs can be produced under "test conditions," that is, in an apparently inexplicable way to the ordinary man, who is not a conjurer. The article is illustrated with reproductions of such photographs.

Again, it is a curious fact how even distinguished scientific men may sometimes be so much the subjects of bias that their standard of truth can be quite different in researches of this nature from what it is in problems of so-called "natural science." For instance, the distinguished French physiologist, Richet, is reported to have given in an interview his own personal experience as proof of the materialisation of spirits.[1]

He was the guest in Algeria of General and Madame Noel, who apparently for a year or more had been developing belief in the mediumistic powers of Mlle. Marthe B., but recently the fiancée of their son, deceased in the Congo. The séances took place at their residence, the Villa Carmen, in August and September, 1905. Mlle. Marthe B., with the help of a negress servant and a materialisation alcove (a corner of the room curtained off) into which they both retired, produced what purported to be the materialised spirit of an Arab, "Bien Boa" by name. Professor Richet asked the spirit to blow through a tube into a glass of fluid which was standing on a table. M. Bien Boa most obligingly and guilelessly did so. The fluid turned cloudy. Now, as the fluid was baryta-water, and the cloudiness was due to a precipitate of carbonate of barium, it is satisfactory evidence that carbonic acid came from the spirit, and one could not have a better proof than this of its material nature. But, whereas this affords conclusive evidence to Professor Richet's mind—as well as to mine—of the material nature of the spirit, it raises no doubt in his mind of the spiritual nature of the matter! Is not this an excellent example of belief warped by bias and of experiment done without scientific precautions, such as control experiments, for arriving at the truth? For I am sure that any one who has seen what Maskelyne can

[1] This interview with Professor Richet is given in the December number of the *Pall Mall Magazine*, 1906. *See also* "Annals of Psychical Science," II., p. 207, October, 1906, where Professor Richet describes in detail his experiences at the Villa Carmen with the medium Mademoiselle Marthe B.

do with a materialisation-cabinet will realise the necessity of being extra careful before giving a supernatural explanation to the performance of a medium allowed the use of apparatus. In this particular case, Professor Richet describes the details with such transparent honesty that it is possible to see exactly how he was taken in. For, *first*, the room was only illuminated by a candle placed in a red photographic lantern which stood on a shelf at a height of 6 ft. 9 in. above the floor. He says :—" Finally, I will note that the curtain had an opening and was so made that the right side was longer than the left side. When the curtain was fully opened, we were able to distinguish the hands and faces of the mediums and their garments. At the same time, it was rather difficult to recognise them when the opening was at its maximum. On the contrary, in the room itself, outside the cabinet, at a distance of 1 yd. to 1½ yds. the various sitters could easily be recognised." *Second*, he took no precautions to control the medium, for he says :—" Let us assume that Marthe, whom we have never searched nor bound, could bring on her person all the apparatus necessary to serve for her disguisement, is it possible that she could have made use of them ? Now I answer boldly : ' No.' " *Third*, we are told that the materialised figure had a face exactly like that of the medium, " if she had stuck a coarse black moustache on to her upper lip." *Fourth*, Professor Richet admits that he was never permitted to catch hold of the materialised figure, although he had " in vain at various times asked insistently for this experience." *Fifth*, in the photographs taken by flashlight the figure of Bien Boa always concealed the medium's face, although the negress came out quite clearly. This is Professor Richet's explanation :—" In fact, Bien Boa had informed us that, as Marthe feared the magnesium light, he would take care to hide her eyes and face during the taking of the photograph." *Sixth*, in one of the photographs the left sleeve of the medium's dress is seen apparently pinned to the negress's chair, and is apparently empty of any

arm. Here is Richet's comment on this surprising fact:—"These are certainly very serious objections, but it is allowable to suppose that the phenomenon, so mysterious, almost inexplicable, which we call materialisation, is accompanied by a sort of disaggregation (?) of the pre-existing matter, so that the new matter formed is formed at the expense of the old, and that the medium empties herself, so to speak, in order to constitute the new being, which emanates from her, and which cannot be touched without harm to the medium. . . . I am not afraid of saying that the emptiness of this sleeve, far from demonstrating the presence of fraud, establishes, on the contrary, that there was no fraud; also that it seems to speak in favour of a sort of material disaggregation of the medium, which she herself was incapable of suspecting." *Seventh*, in an appendix to Richet's account written by a Madame X., who took part in the séances, we learn that on one occasion they detected Marthe putting her hand through the opening in the curtain. Here is the comment on this unfortunate accident:—"I am quite sure this was Marthe's hand we saw, for I distinctly saw her rise from her chair, pass her hand through the aperture in the curtain and shake her hand about in a way identical with the way in which the 'materialised' hand had, a little while before, shaken itself about; and this at a moment when I had seen Marthe's two hands on her knees. This 'automatism' is easily explained, so it seems to me, by circumstances . . . the exhausted medium was most probably hypnotised into simulating reality by this tiresomely reiterated request for the very phenomena simulated. It was pure automatism, and a clumsy one, too."

I have given this experience at considerable length, so that the reader may judge for himself the quality of the evidence which often convinces scientific men—in other fields justly eminent—whose opinion is then quoted by the public as conclusive proof of the reality of spiritualistic phenomena. But it must not be imagined that fraud is always the explanation of so-called ghostly

appearances. For belief in that class of ghost, associated with a sensory hallucination, rests on undoubtedly better evidence. I, myself, know a man who, in walking along a road, saw the figure of an old woman so real in every respect, that he stepped out of the way to avoid it, and yet next second it had disappeared. Another of my friends saw the figure of a man, dressed in the antiquated dress of a smuggler of a century ago, appear on the cliff-road along which he was walking, and then suddenly disappear over the cliff. There can, in fact, be no doubt of the genuine occurrence of this class of phenomena; but the question still remains whether it is necessary to seek a supernatural explanation. The natural explanation is that they are all subjective phenomena, due to brain conditions or to misinterpreted sense-perceptions (*i.e.*, hallucinations and illusions). Thus, my friend who told me about seeing the figure of an old woman, though quite convinced of the reality of the phenomenon, was quite prepared to admit that he may have been deceived by a shadow on the road, or by some other illusory appearance. In favour of a natural explanation of such occurrences are the following considerations :—

(*a*) That diseased conditions of the brain are known to give rise to delusions and hallucinations, as in the well-known instance of the victim of delirium tremens seeing snakes or rats or beetles, etc.

(*b*) That conditions of disturbed cerebral circulation are also known to give rise to visions of people and other hallucinations. Dr. Henry Head, for instance, has written a paper on " Certain Mental Changes That Accompany Visceral Disease," from his own hospital experience, in which he describes a variety of hallucinations.

(*c*) That people in apparently good health are sometimes subject to curious neurasthenic symptoms, of which hallucinations are not uncommon. Of course, if we adopt a natural explanation, and it is admitted that these experiences are subjective, it does not exclude the possibility of the subjective phenomena being themselves

the result of a supernatural agency acting on the brain; but here we reach a region of hypothesis pure and simple, incapable of proof or disproof. And as we know that diseased conditions of the brain can produce subjective phenomena, it is only reasonable to give the same explanation to allied subjective phenomena, till very strong reasons are found for the probability of a supernatural agency, and till belief in the same rests on something stronger than mere assumption and the bias of superstition, characteristic of ignorant savage races and of childish minds. This class of ghost-story can be classified under the heading, "Phantasms of the Dead and Living," and it will perhaps be of interest to the reader, if I anticipate what I am about to say on the subject of telepathy by citing two or three interesting cases of this type of experience.

Before doing so, however, some remarks about the kind of testimony, on which such experiences rest, are necessary.

Gurney, who may be described as the chief author of "Phantasms of the Living," says in his introductory remarks, "We have not been able to regard the alleged phenomena in the completely detached fashion which most of those who consider them naturally adopt. We are unable to determine how far the impression on our own minds of the evidence for *spontaneous* telepathy has been dependent on our conviction of the genuineness of cognate *experimental* cases." This means, that he admits bias in favour of the possibility of *spontaneous* cases of telepathy generally, and he himself says that thereby the presumption against belief in wraiths and phantasms of the living is diminished and "the hospitality of the mind to such phenomena is increased in a degree which is none the less important that it does not admit of calculation." Such bias is reasonable in as far as it makes anyone prepared to believe in the possibility of phantasms of the living, especially if the experiments in telepathy on which it rests are reliable; but it is unjustifiable if it makes an investigator lax in demanding

corroborative evidence of the truth of the story in each particular case. For, as Mr. Taylor Innes says:—(*Nineteenth Century*, vol. xxii., pp. 192, 193.) "Experiments in telepathy may very well dispose those who are fortunate enough to witness them to be perfectly willing to admit evidence for wraiths generally—to be satisfied that there is no presumption against wraiths, and that the truth of each alleged case simply depends upon the evidence brought forward for it in particular. That belongs to the region not of telepathy but of testimony. Some of us have long since been convinced that a wraith, like any other alleged phenomenon—a meteor or sea-serpent—is to be believed the moment proof for it is brought forward, and that, assuming even that there is no presumption for it, there is certainly none against it. And once that point is attained, experimental telepathy cannot help us much in dealing with the evidence for a case said to have occurred spontaneously. In particular, it cannot help us in what has been the sole subject of our inquiries here—the weight to be attached to subsequent oral and to contemporary written testimony, respectively. The value of these *inter se*, the general slipperiness of the former and the general conclusiveness of the latter, and how far in any particular case we can get past the evidence which is slippery and subsequent, and fall back upon that which is conclusive and contemporary—all this belongs to the region of common sense, dealing with different classes of testimony. And in that region of comparative evidence a bias in favour of telepathy, like a bias against it, cannot seriously help an inquirer, though it may seriously hinder him. It is unfortunate, therefore, if any such bias has been so powerful as to produce the treatment of documentary evidence which we have here criticised."

The last words of the above quotation refer to the fact that Mr. Innes showed that in all the 702 cases appearing in "Phantasms of the Living"—representing the sifted material out of over 2,000 depositions about wraiths and allied phenomena, and containing 350 experiences which were related to the authors first hand and

were passed by them as satisfying their standards of evidence—there was not a *single* case in which documentary evidence corroborating the truth of the story was produced. And this, in spite of the fact that in at least twenty cases the narrator alleged that letters crossed, describing the experience and the corresponding actual event, or that some documentary proof had been issued at the time; while in quite a hundred cases the existence of some corroborative documentary evidence is implied. Further, in nine cases in which documentary evidence was still forthcoming, the story was weakened rather than strengthened[1], and in at least two cases the authors passed stories where the statement, that a note of the experience had been made at the time, turned out to be a falsehood or invention. On the significance of this Mr. Innes says, "Now it might be going to work too strictly to say to every man who tells us of a wraith or phantasm, 'We cannot listen to you unless you prove that you made a note of it at the time and before you heard of the fulfilment.' That, of course, is the most conclusive kind of evidence. Yet in its absence we may receive his statement as uncorroborated verbal evidence. But it is a different matter where a note made at the time is actually alleged, and that pretended note no longer exists—above all, where, as in the two cases just quoted, it turns out to be a falsehood or invention. In such a case it is surely not too much to ask of an intelligent scrutiniser of evidence that he shall wipe out the story from the mass of delusion that solicits the wearied eyes of men. Yet, if such a principle were acted upon in these volumes, how much of them, in so far as they profess contemporary records of the facts, would be left? What for example would become of No. 140? . . . And it is too evident that its being printed here is a mere indication of the systematic relaxation of all ordinary rules with which this matter of documentary evidence is throughout treated. I have said nothing with regard to the surrounding mass of "spontaneous" cases where there is

[1] For an excellent recent case, *see* Apendix I (B).

no written evidence to help us, having made no study of these. But I have observed no indication that these have been dealt with on any more rigid principle than the documentary cases we have investigated in detail, or that the latter have been singled out for laxity. I suspect it will be found that both departments of testimony to alleged spontaneous appearances share in the same merits and defects which we have found in the one which alone the public can adequately test." (*Loc. cit.*, pp. 191, 192.)

A further point to be realised is that the reader of a book like "Phantasms of the Living" only gets the stories at second-hand, and so cannot judge of the value of the written evidence unless the editors say minutely "what endeavours have been made to inspect the documentary evidence; with what refusal or other obstacles that endeavour was met; and whether, in the resulting view of the editors, the document which they refer to exists now or ever did exist at all?" It is always necessary to remember this, because, as Mr. Innes says, "in some of the most important of the cases now before us, as well as of those where letters crossed or were exchanged, there is no notice of any such endeavour, and no statement how it was frustrated. And it is necessary to point out that this system of printing stories about documents without remark destroys the confidence which we are intended to derive from the following assurance. 'As far as written testimony goes, the reader will have the same opportunities as we have had for forming an opinion.'" (*Loc. cit.*, p. 187.)

The moral to be drawn from all this is that in the absence of documentary proof—and a single case, in which the letters, said to have crossed, could be produced with the official postmark and date, would be sufficient to prove the truth of this class of phenomena—stories of phantasms or wraiths rest on nothing better than uncorroborated oral evidence, with all the fallacies of unconscious exaggeration, invention, the natural human love of the marvellous, and defective memory attached thereto.

For psychologists, who have specially studied the subject, have no hesitation in stating that the memory of a dream or waking hallucination cannot be relied on for accurately reproducing the experience as it actually occurred. Even Gurney admitted that " the story of the percipient " is far more liable to error than the account of the actual death or crisis which was said to have been perceived. With these preliminary warning remarks, I now proceed to give a few examples of fairly recent phantasmal experiences.

One of the most recent was the appearance of Dr. Astley's supposed astral body to his housekeeper at King's Lynn, and also to his *locum tenens*, the Rev. R. Brock, in December, 1908, when Dr. Astley was away in Algeria on a holiday.[1] Another good example is the following case of General Thompson's dog, which has some features recalling the well-known experience of Mr. Rider Haggard, who had a vivid dream, in which he saw a favourite dog lying in some water about the hour when the dog was killed by a passing train on a bridge over a river.[2]

General J. C. Thompson is an American, and his statement is as follows :—

> " Jim, the dog, whose ghost I refer to, was a beautiful collie, the pet of my family, residing at Cheyenne, Wyoming. His affectionate nature surpassed even that of his kind. He had a wide celebrity in the city as the " laughing dog," due to the fact that he

[1] This experience is too long to reproduce in any detail here ; so I have inserted in Appendix I (A) quotations from *The Times*, illustrating the particular features of this case.

[2] Mr. Rider Haggard's experience was first published in the form of a letter to *The Times* on July 21st, 1904, p. 4. In a second letter to *The Times* on August 9th, he admits the dog was killed instantaneously, and says : " No telepathic impressions could have been produced by the dog, as the dog was in life. If at all, then, they must have been produced by a dog to all intents and purposes dead." His own solution is *either* some non-bodily but surviving part of the life or spirit of the dog, *or* a mere " raw-boned " coincidence.

manifested recognition of acquaintances and love for his friends by a joyful laugh, as distinctively such as that of any human being.

One evening in the fall of 1905, about 7.30 p.m., I was walking with a friend on the Seventeenth Street in Denver, Colorado. As we approached the entrance to the First National Bank, we observed a dog lying in the middle of the pavement, and on coming up to him I was amazed by his perfect likeness to Jim in Cheyenne. The identity was greatly fortified by his loving recognition of me, and the peculiar laugh of Jim's accompanying it. I said to my friend that nothing but the 106 miles between Denver and Cheyenne would keep me from making oath to the dog being Jim, whose peculiarities I explained to him. The dog, astral or ghost, was apparently badly hurt; he could not rise. After petting him and giving him a kind adieu, we crossed over Stout Street and stopped to look at him again. He had vanished. The next morning's mail brought a letter from my wife, saying that Jim had been accidentally killed the evening before at 7.30 p.m. I shall always believe it was Jim's ghost I saw."[1]

As I gather that General Thompson actually touched the dog, inasmuch as he says that he petted it, one's reason at once suggests that he was mistaken in the dog, and by coincidence his own dog died about the same time. For if it was a case of waking hallucination, it had very unusual features entailing tactile, visual and auditory hallucinations. Further, if General Thompson really believed it was his own dog, his conduct in leaving the dog " badly hurt " was most unfeeling.

Another authentic and instructive case is the experience of Mr. F. G. of Boston, who saw what he thought was the apparition of a favourite sister nine years after her death. His statement is as follows :—

[1] General Thompson's experience is quoted by Beckles Willson in " Occultism and Common-Sense," p. 38.

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"The hour was high noon, and the sun was shining cheerfully into my room. Whilst busily smoking my cigar and writing out my orders, I suddenly became conscious that some one was sitting on my left with one arm resting on the table, and quick as a flash I turned, and distinctly saw the form of my dead sister, and for a brief second or so looked her squarely in the face; and so sure was I that it was she that I sprang forward in delight, calling her by name, and as I did so the apparition instantly vanished."

The visitation so impressed the percipient that he took the next train home and related to his parents what had occurred. He particularly mentioned a bright red line or scratch on the right hand side of his sister's face which he had distinctly seen.

"When I mentioned this, my mother rose trembling to her feet and nearly fainted away; and as soon as she sufficiently recovered her self-possession, with tears streaming down her face, she exclaimed that I had indeed seen my sister, as no living mortal but herself was aware of the scratch, which she had accidentally made while doing some little act of kindness after my sister's death. In proof, neither my father nor any of our family had detected it and were positively unaware of the incident. Yet I saw the scratch as bright as if just made. So strangely impressed was my mother, that, even after she had retired to rest, she got up and dressed, came to me, and told me she knew that I had seen my sister. A few weeks later my mother died." [1]

Although I shall discuss in the next chapter the different types of waking hallucination, of which this is most probably a case, yet I will here make a few remarks on this particular experience. Like all these cases, it is not capable of repetition, and so no scientific proof of the cause of the phenomenon is possible. But from a com-

[1] This experience is also quoted in "Occultism and Common-Sense," p. 101.

mon-sense point of view the scratch seen on the face of the apparition does not impress me in favour of a supernatural explanation. It is very possible that this was a striking feature of the apparition; but it must be remembered that dreams and waking hallucinations, (both those which come true and those which do not,) are often characterised by absurd and peculiar features. Again, there is no doubt that it was this feature which impressed the narrator's mother, as she knew of the scratch she had made after death. But to my mind the mere fact that the scratch was made after death makes it difficult for one's reason to admit any causal connection between the dead sister and the apparition. If conditions which arise after death could affect the nature of an apparition, we might as soon have expected the sister's skeleton to have appeared. Consequently, if my remarks strike the reader as just, this is a very good instance of how a mere coincidence impresses the unscientific actors in an experience of this kind with the necessity for a supernatural explanation. Also it is a good instance of a psychical experience being ingenuously told as if only one explanation were possible. The fact that the narrator's mother said she knew he had seen his sister does not prove anything, nor the fact that a few weeks later his mother died.

TELEPATHY.

"The germinal difference between the metaphysical and scientific methods is not that they draw their explanations from a different source, the one employing reasoning, where the other employs observation, but that the one is content with an explanation which has no further guarantee than is given in the logical explanation of the difficulty; whereas the other imperatively demands that every assumption should be treated as provisional, hypothetical, until it has been confronted with fact, tested by acknowledged tests—in a word, verified." (G. H. Lewes, *Prolegomena*, § 23.)

CHAPTER IV

TELEPATHY AND CLAIRVOYANCE

UNDER the heading of telepathy[1] is included every phenomenon suggesting that mind is able to act on mind at a distance without the aid of speech or the five senses. The evidence for telepathy is at first sight most striking and abundant, so that a belief in its reality is now almost universal, at any rate outside strictly scientific circles. However, in spite of this, I propose to examine the nature of the evidence, and I will begin by quoting a typical case of supposed telepathy, which, as far as I know, has never been published. I am acquainted with a lady who was practising private nursing in Australia about the year 1900. Early one morning she woke up full of dread, and feeling that her favourite sister in England wanted her. She told me that she was sufficiently impressed to make a note of the time and circumstance in her diary; and that six weeks afterwards a letter came announcing the death of her sister, just about the time that she had had the feeling of dread.[2]

[1] The reader interested in telepathy should also refer to Appendix J, where some other difficulties connected with this hypothesis are examined.

[2] This is the type of experience which gets quoted without any attempt at scientific verification. Yet how necessary this is was shown by the researches of the late M. Vaschide, who collected as many as 1,374 cases of subjective hallucinations experienced by thirty-four persons (eighteen women and sixteen men) from among his own personal friends and acquaintances. Of these 1,374 experiences, 1,325 were thought by the subjects of the hallucinations to correspond to some real fact; in other words, to be veridical. But M. Vaschide found, on making inquiries, that

Many similar experiences have now been recorded by thoroughly trustworthy witnesses ; and some of the best may be found in the publications of the Society for Psychical Research, so that there really is no question about the facts in many of these cases. The only question is about the explanation.

Now, I have known two or three other persons with experiences similar to the one I have quoted ; and the first thing which strikes me about these persons is, that so much have they been impressed by their single personal experience, that no amount of evidence to the contrary would shake their belief in the existence of telepathy. They have made up their minds irrevocably on their own single personal experience. In contrast to this, just consider what a similar course of action would mean in any research problem of natural science. For if an experimenter trusts to a single experiment, however striking, without repetition, the chances of his being led into fallacies are enormous, as has been proved repeatedly in the history of natural science. Perhaps only a man who has done research can fully realise the foolishness of such an unscientific method of basing belief.

But it may be objected that, owing to the nature of the case, these so-called telepathic experiences cannot be repeated, and that on the other hand there have now been recorded hundreds of similar cases. This last argument is apt to be very convincing to any one without a scientific

such was really so in only forty-eight cases ; that is, there were 1,277 cases or 96 per cent. in which the subject of the hallucination had imagined the veridical coincidence. The forty-eight cases where there really was a coincidence between the hallucination and the fact only form 2.25 per cent. of the total number of cases, and may therefore well be explained by chance-coincidence when it is considered that often a train of thought leading up to the hallucination had been started by knowledge of the illness of a relative or friend. The reader should certainly himself refer to this important research of M. Vaschide (*Les Hallucinations Télépathiques*, Bloud & Cie., 1908), where the facts underlying the hallucinations are analysed and the whole question of " phantasms of the living " is fairly, if critically, examined.

training. But from a scientific point of view one experiment repeated ten times and giving the same result under approximately identical conditions is a hundred times more convincing than a hundred different experiments giving non-identical results, even though some of them be analogous or individually extraordinarily striking. Scientifically all one can say is that the evidence for telepathy is wonderfully suggestive; but that as the conditions practically never admit the repetition of any one experiment, it is most reasonable to remain agnostic till the question of other possible explanations has been discussed. If one can find a natural explanation which is probable, and which is in accordance with the known facts of physical science and mental physiology, it will be unnecessary to seek what we may call the supernormal explanation of telepathy, though theoretically there is no difficulty in believing in the possibility of mind acting on mind by vibrations started in the ether or any other theoretical medium which one chooses to postulate. Practically, however, there is overwhelming evidence that on ordinary occasions mind does not act on mind at a distance, as will be obvious at once to the reader who considers the facts of life. In war, for instance, there would be no need of an "intelligence department," if the enemy's plans could be detected by telepathy. We have then got to consider if a natural explanation of telepathy can be given to those extraordinary occasions when telepathy to the ordinary uninstructed mind appears the only possible explanation of the facts. If such an explanation can be given, and it appears probable to the reader, he must choose for himself between the normal and supernormal explanations, as the question can never be absolutely proved one way or the other.

Telepathy is rather a vague word, and so it embraces a large number of diverse phenomena, which admit of a certain rough classification, viz.: (*a*) Cases where facts known to a mind in a living body are supposed to be made known to the mind of the percipient. (*b*) Cases where facts known to a mind before death are after death

made known to the mind of the percipient. (*c*) Cases where facts known to no human mind are made known to the mind of the percipient, and therefore may be looked upon as instances of telepathy between "the Divine Mind" and a human mind. In theological language such cases are called "Special Providences," or "the Interposition of Providence."

Again, different names are given to telepathic phenomena in accordance with the state of the percipient, viz.: (1) a dream constitutes a case where the percipient is asleep; (2) a waking hallucination is a case where the percipient, in apparently normal health and awake, receives an impression; (3) clairvoyance includes cases where the percipient transmits messages, generally from supposed disembodied spirits or discarnate intelligences, either (*a*) by automatic writing, etc., or (*b*) in a state of trance, or (*c*) under what I may call mediumistic conditions, that is, with the help of apparatus or a darkened room, and often accompanied by physical phenomena. (4) Lastly, there are a number of cases done under supposed experimental conditions.

Before discussing telepathy, I want to impress on the reader what is the nature of hypnotism, as in popular psychical literature nothing is commoner than to find great confusion of ideas and language on the subject, and to read of hypnotic phenomena as proof of telepathy.

One of the simplest instances of a living mechanism which responds to suggestion is that of a frog deprived of its cerebral hemispheres. It is only necessary to set up a sensory stimulus, for the frog inevitably to react in some particular way. It has no will of its own, for it subconsciously reacts like an automaton to sensory stimuli. Thus, whereas a normal frog on the one hand sits up on its hind legs and reacts to stimuli as it likes—and one can never prophesy beforehand how it will behave—on the other hand a frog deprived of its cerebral hemispheres (the highest parts of the brain) lies more or less flat on the ground and makes no effort to move. If a piece of moist paper is placed on its nose, so as to

obstruct the inflow of air, it will inevitably brush it away. A normal frog, on the other hand, might leave it alone or hop away.

This is a very simple instance of subconscious action; but it serves fairly well as a ground-work for building up a picture of the state of a hypnotised subject. Such a subject of course is a much more complicated mechanism than the frog deprived of its cerebral hemispheres; but the principle is much the same. The subject's will-power, though it may be actually stronger, works more or less in conformity with the suggestions of the operator, and actions are performed sometimes quite subconsciously in response to the stimulus of suggestion.

The experiments of Dr. Bramwell[1] and others on time-estimation, etc., in hypnotic subjects are sometimes

[1] Dr. Bramwell carried out a series of experiments on a lady, who agreed to write down the time on a piece of paper (which she always carried about with her), whenever she felt the impulse to do so. In each experiment the lady was hypnotised, and the suggestion was made that she should write down the time after a certain number of minutes had elapsed. This she succeeded in doing correctly to the minute in forty-five out of fifty-five experiments. Of the remaining ten experiments, in eight there were minute differences, never exceeding five minutes between the subject's correct estimate of when the suggestion fell due and the moment at which she carried it out. Here is one experiment: Dr. Bramwell hypnotised her, and a friend (Dr. Barclay), who was present, suggested that she should write down the time in 21,434 minutes. When she woke up, she had no remembrance of the suggested time. Yet she wrote down the time correctly 21,434 minutes after the suggestion had been made. In her normal state the lady was incapable of correctly calculating in her mind how many days and hours 21,434 minutes would make; and even in the hypnotised state her reckoning was not free from error.

Similarly the wonderful appreciation of space and power of balance shown by somnambulists is but another example of the important faculties possessed by lower centres, when unchecked by the interference of the so-called will; for consciousness of danger and the fear thereby felt at once deranges the mechanism.

For a fuller account of these and analogous experiments I must refer the reader to Dr. Bramwell's book, "Hypnotism, its History, Practice and Theory" (1903, Grant Richards).

referred to in popular psychical literature as proving the probability of telepathy, but they prove nothing more than the following, that, in the course of growth (both of the child, and also of the race from which he has been evolved) the various habits acquired by human beings and carried out by the lower centres are learnt under the conscious guidance of the higher centres or so-called will-power. In the course of time these habits can be carried out more or less subconsciously, so little effort does it now take for the higher centres to start the mechanism. And in a few instances, like that of time and space appreciation, the mechanism comes to work so smoothly without the interference of the higher centres, that we are unaware how excellent is the mechanism of the lower centres until we do special experiments to demonstrate it.[1]

Thus all that hypnotism has proved is the excellence of the nervous mechanism which can be put into action either in a state of hypnosis by the suggestions of an operator, or normally by one's own will-power, or subconsciously in quite a normal way by sensory stimuli, as when a labourer can very nearly guess the time of day, although he has no watch on him.

As we are sometimes conscious of this mechanism and sometimes not, the name subliminal consciousness or subconscious self has been given to the mental side of the phenomenon. And some writers on psychical subjects are very fond of talking as if "subliminal consciousness" were the same thing as "soul," and as if it was the subconscious self which possessed the telepathic faculty.[2]

[1] The inhibitory action of the higher centres associated with consciousness will be quite familiar to any one accustomed to play pieces of music by heart. The piece having once been learnt, the lower centres carry out the mechanical part of the performance almost subconsciously, while consciousness is concentrated on expression, interpretation, etc. Now, very often if one diverts one's attention to the mechanical part of the performance, and consciousness is allowed to be occupied with the thought "I wonder if I have forgotten the next bar," the whole mechanism is interfered with, and one cannot play any more correctly.

[2] For instance, in the *Westminster Gazette* of November, 1907,

For this assumption hypnotism does not afford adequate evidence. All that hypnotism has proved is the wonderful range of action of the lower centres, and how this mechanism can be controlled by outside suggestions coming through the senses. Hypnotism in fact contains no difficulties for the most pronounced materialist, and affords no support whatever to the views of spiritualists or other believers in supernatural phenomena.

Having now cleared the ground by giving a brief account of the nature of hypnotism and what it has proved, I will consider some of the difficulties associated with giving a telepathic explanation to the phenomena of dreams, second-sight, waking hallucinations, clairvoyance and trance-utterances.

First, as regards dreams, it is a commonplace how often dreams do not come true, and what nonsense many a dream is.[1] And yet if telepathy be given as an explanation of the dreams which do come true, it is hardly logical to give a different explanation to the other ninety-nine per cent. However, taking only those dreams which appear to have been verified, there is very little justifica-

one reads in *Notes of the Day*: "His (*i.e.*, the writer of articles on 'Occultism and Common-sense,') conclusion is briefly that amid much fraud and self-deception there is good evidence for the existence in the living personality of faculties which are called telepathic, subconscious, or subliminal."

[1] A friend of mine recently told me that one night, in 1906, he dreamt that he was present at his sister's funeral, and was so much impressed that in the morning he sent a telegram to his parents asking if his sister was all right. She was perfectly well, and subsequently her health was not affected by her brother's dream. My friend, at the time of the dream, was in his usual health, that is not exceptionally robust, as he told me he is liable to wake up in the morning slightly depressed.

The reader interested in dreams should consult a book like the recent work of Mr. Havelock Ellis ("The World of Dreams," Constable & Co., 1911), where the characteristics of the dreaming state are fully discussed, and it is shown how dreams arise. The chapter on memory in dreams is particularly interesting; and the problem of how it is that we sometimes recognise a place or person whom we have never seen before, as recalling an old memory, is satisfactorily explained.

tion for giving a telepathic explanation. For the only fact in common to the group is the feeling of dread or anxiety felt by the percipient. There is no strict correlation between the time of the experience and the hour at which the object of the dream (who often is in a dying state or placed under abnormal conditions) is supposed to have been thinking of the percipient.

In the majority of cases the experience is usually recorded as if there was accurate synchronism between the two events, and as an example of this class of phenomenon I herewith quote Canon Warburton's experience [1]:—

> "Somewhere about the year 1848 I went up from Oxford to stay a day or two with my brother, Acton Warburton, then a barrister, living at 10, Fish Street, Lincoln's Inn. When I got to his chambers, I found a note on his table, apologising for his absence, and saying that he had gone to a dance somewhere in the West End, and intended to be home soon after one o'clock. Instead of going to bed, I dozed in an arm-chair, but started up wide awake exactly at one, ejaculating, 'By Jove! he's down!' and seeing him coming out of a drawing-room into a brightly illuminated landing, just saving himself by his elbows and hands. (The house was one which I have never seen, nor did I know where it was.) Thinking very little of the matter, I fell adoze again for half-an-hour, and was awakened by my brother suddenly coming in and saying: 'Oh, there you are! I have just had as narrow an escape of breaking my neck as I ever had in my life. Coming out of the ball-room I

[1] In the following illustrations of dreams and waking hallucinations, I have, with one exception, reproduced examples given in "Occultism and Common-sense." My reason for so doing is that, although there are perhaps better cases contained in "Phantasms of the Living" and the publications of the S.P.R., I think these cases, selected by Mr. Willson in his review of the evidence for telepathy up to date, are as suitable for reproduction as any.

caught my foot, and tumbled full length down the stairs.'" (Quoted in "Occultism and Common-Sense," p. 60.)

But there are also cases in which the percipient has the experience hours before the event, and of this class none is more striking than the dream of Mr. Lane.

Mr. Fred Lane's statement is as follows, dated Adelphi Theatre, December 20th, 1897:—"In the early morning of December 16th, 1897, I dreamt that I saw the late Mr. Terriss lying in a state of delirium or unconsciousness on the stairs leading to the dressing-rooms in the Adelphi Theatre. He was surrounded by people engaged at the theatre, amongst whom were Miss Millward and one of the footmen who attend the curtain, both of whom I actually saw a few hours after at the death-scene. His chest was bare and clothes torn aside. Every one who was around him was trying to do something for his good. This dream was in the shape of a picture. I saw it like a tableau on which the curtain would rise and fall. I immediately after dreamt that we did not open at the Adelphi Theatre that evening. I was in my dressing-room in the dream, but the latter part was somewhat incoherent. The next morning, on going down to the theatre for rehearsal, the first member of the company I met was Miss H., to whom I mentioned this dream. On arriving at the theatre, I also mentioned it to several other members of the company, including Messrs. Creagh Henry, Buxton, Carter, Bligh, etc. This dream, though it made such an impression on me as to cause me to relate it to my fellow-artistes, did not give me the idea of any coming disaster. I may state that I have dreamt formerly of deaths of relatives and other matters which have impressed me; but the dreams have never impressed me sufficiently to make me repeat them the following morning, and have never been verified. My dream of the present occasion was the most vivid I have ever

experienced, in fact life-like, and exactly represented the scene as I saw it at night." (*Journal S.P.R.*, February, 1898, p. 195.)

There are also other cases in which the percipient has the experience hours or days after the event. Of this class I may quote the following :—

"Mr. Podmore relates how a neighbour of his, on the night of June 24th, 1894, dreamt that President Carnot had been assassinated. He told his family before the morning paper announcing the news had been opened. As has been pointed out, in a case of that kind it seems possible that the information may have reached the sleeper in his dreams from the shouts of a news-boy, or even from the conversation of passers-by in the street." ("Occultism and Common-Sense," p. 60.)

Waking hallucinations may be discussed as if they were dreams, for they are analogous phenomena, and the fact that the percipient is awake when he has the experience does not really affect the essence of the phenomenon. Two points in particular I wish to accentuate: firstly, that only a very small number of experiences are verified; and secondly, that, just as in dreams, one finds the same want of synchronism between the perception of the event and the hour of its occurrence. Here are three examples :—

(*a*) Apparently synchronous.

Lord Charles Beresford's experience as given to the S.P.R. :—

"It was in the spring of 1864, whilst on board *H.M.S. Racoon*, between Gibraltar and Marseilles, that I went into my office on the main deck to get a pipe, and as I opened the door I saw my father lying in his coffin as plainly as I could. It gave me an awful jerk, and I immediately told some of the fellows who were smoking just outside the usual place between the guns, and I also told dear old Onslow, our chaplain.

A few days after we arrived at Marseilles, and I heard of my father's death, and he had been buried that very day and at the time, half-past twelve in the day. I may add that at the time it was a bright, sunny day, and I had not been fretting about my father, as the latest news I had of him was that although very ill he was better. My dear old father and I were great chums, more so than is usual between a man of seventy-two and a boy of twenty, our respective ages then." (Quoted in "Occultism and Common-Sense," p. 84.)

(*b*) After the event.

From the *Westminster Gazette*, November 18th, 1907.

"Instances of clairvoyance in children are remarkably numerous. A few weeks ago the Rome correspondent of the *Tribune* reported that a boy of twelve at Capua was discovered sobbing and crying as if his heart would break. Asked by his mother the reason of his distress, he said that he had just seen his father, who was absent in America, at the point of death, assisted by two Sisters of Charity. Next morning a letter came from America announcing the father's death. Remembering the boy's vision, his mother tried to keep the tale a secret, lest he should be regarded as possessed; but her efforts were vain, several persons having been present when he explained the cause of his grief."

(*c*) Before the event.[1]

The case of Prince Duleep Singh, who writes:—

"On Saturday, October 21st, 1893, I was in Berlin with Lord Carnarvon. We went to a theatre together and retired before midnight. I went to bed, leaving

[1] This class of experience is apt to be recorded through ignorance of the necessity of allowing for longitude. The percipient, wishing to make the story impressive, tells how the vision was seen exactly at the moment when the event was taking place somewhere

as I always do, a bright light in the room (electric light). As I lay in bed, I found myself looking at an oleograph which hung on the wall opposite my bed. I saw distinctly the face of my father, the Maharajah Duleep Singh, looking at me, as it were, out of this picture, not like a portrait of him, but his real head. The head about filled the picture frame. I continued looking, and still saw my father looking at me with an intent expression. Though not in the least alarmed, I was so puzzled that I got out of bed to see what the picture really was. It was an oleograph commonplace picture of a girl holding a rose and leaning out of a balcony, an arch forming the background. The girl's face was quite small, whereas my father's head was the size of life and filled the frame."

On the day following the dream he mentioned it to Lord Carnarvon, and on the evening of that day Lord Carnarvon handed him a telegram announcing the elder Prince's death. (Quoted in "Occultism and Common Sense," p. 91.)

Of all the above experiences, that of Mr. Lane is particularly interesting and instructive, because he admits that he was frequently having dreams which never came true; and that, on the occasion of his dreaming about Mr. Terriss's death, he only spoke about it because

on the other side of the world. For instance, *see* Cases 345 and 495 in "Phantasms of the Living."

Andrew Lang, also, in "The Making of Religion" (pp. 97-104, including footnote, 3rd ed., Longmans, 1909), makes two slips, or at any rate cites two cases, which illustrate the difficulties introduced by geography. In the first a letter, posted (or rather written) in Cairo on January 27th, is said to have been received in Scotland on January 31st—an impossible feat even in these days of aeroplanes. In the second a lady in Scotland is supposed to have had a vision of a scene which was taking place in India at the moment. But this result is obtained by allowance being made for longitude the wrong way. For India is about five hours ahead of Scotland in time, and so 5 p.m. in India corresponds to about noon in Scotland; whereas the story is told as if it corresponded to 10 p.m. in Scotland.

it was a more vivid and striking experience than usual. It illustrates a psychological fact, which is not known to the ordinary man, that feelings of dread, waking hallucinations or some sort of similar experience, are by no means uncommon in people enjoying apparently good health. The late Professor Sidgwick and the Society for Psychical Research made a census of 17,000 healthy, normal people, and found that 655 out of 8,372 men, and 1,029 out of 8,628 women—very nearly 10 per cent. out of the whole number—had had experiences. If then experiences are so comparatively common, there is nothing improbable in the view that coincidence is a sufficient explanation of those few cases, which may be said to " come true," and which make such an impression on the subject of the experience that they get reported—not always accurately—while the far more numerous cases which do not " come true " are never heard of again.[1] For no sane man will deny that coincidences, against the

[1] Professor Newcomb, first President of the American Society of Psychical Research, wrote an article in the *Nineteenth Century* for January, 1909, in which he gave the conclusions he had reached after half a century's study of the subject. He says (p. 132): " Taking the hundreds of coincidences as they stand, and regarding each narrative as complete in itself, the conclusion that there must have been some causal connection between the distant event or emotion and the vision looks unavoidable. But may it not be that causes already known are sufficient to account for the supposed coincidences without introducing telepathy or any other abnormal agency? " His reply is that the theory of mere coincidence still holds good. Every one who sleeps in London is surrounded by several millions of minds. Scores of people are in the throes of death every minute. How then do the inhabitants of London sleep undisturbed? Thousands of people have " visions " and strange dreams. In one case in a million the vision seems to have had a basis in living fact. That is the case that is investigated; the other 999,999 are neglected.

Readers interested in the subject of experimental telepathy should read an article by William Marriott in the October number of *Pearson's Magazine* for 1910, where the difficulty of guarding against collusion is explained. *See* also Appendix R.

For a fuller consideration of the difficulties of telepathy, and of the explanation of coincidental hallucinations, *see* Appendix J.

occurrence of which the chances are very remote, do occur in the world. As an example, I will give the following instance from a letter in the *Daily Graphic*, September 7th, 1905 :—

"SIR,

"Among many strange coincidences which I have experienced in my time, one of the most singular which I can recall at the moment happened to me in connection with a play which I wrote some twenty years ago for the German Reed entertainment. One of my characters was named Robert Golding, and for the requirements of the plot I had made him the sole survivor of the crew of a ship called the *Caroline*, which had been lost at sea. A few days after the production of the play I read in a newspaper an account of the shipwreck of a vessel named the *Caroline*, which had gone down with all hands, with one exception, and this exception was a man of the name of Golding. Now Golding is not at all a common name, and the circumstance of his being, both in fact and fiction, the sole survivor of the shipwrecked *Caroline*, impressed me at the time as being a coincidence of a very peculiar nature.

"Yours faithfully,

"ARTHUR LAW."

This is a case of pure coincidence about which there can be no doubt[1]; but in the realm of dreams and hallucinatory experiences it is difficult to get such a clear case. However, it will be instructive also to give here an instance of a premonitory dream, never before published, which I think will be admitted by most people to be

[1] It is surprising how many cases of striking coincidences can be collected by any one on the look-out for them. Thus, in the *Daily Telegraph* of June 21st, 1909, it is recorded how two vessels collided in a fog off Dungeness. One was a cruiser and the other a Wilson liner, but both were named "Sappho."

An excellent collection of coincidences is contained in a correspondence which went on in the *Daily Graphic* between August 28th and October 10th, 1905.

clearly a case of coincidence; though my friend who told me his dream was so much impressed by it that I doubt if coincidence would satisfy him as an explanation.

> Mr. E. W., in the year 1902, had been living in the bush (in the Pahiatua district of New Zealand) for months, and never thinking about horse-racing, when one night he had a most impressive dream of a race, in which a horse called Kanaka won. He heard the crowd shouting the name "Kanaka! Kanaka!" in a way which almost drummed it into his brain. On waking, he was so much impressed that he rode twenty or thirty miles to the nearest town, got a racing almanac and found a horse called Kanaka was entered for the steeplechase at the Wanganui races next week. He wired to have some money put on the horse, and when the race was run the horse came in first.
>
> Now as no two race-horses in New Zealand can have the same name, it is not very easy to get a new name for a horse. Also as Kanaka is the name given to the natives of the Pacific Islands in the neighbourhood of New Zealand, Kanaka is by no means an unlikely name for a race-horse in New Zealand. The coincidence therefore consists in the fact that this particular horse should have been racing next week and should have won. But the chances are not abnormally great against it, and if the horse had not won, the dream might have been forgotten long ago.

Also the following account of an apparently genuine spirit-photograph, which I heard Professor Barrett cite as an instance of coincidence combined with a natural explanation, is worth recording here.

> In the autumn of 1891 a lady, Miss D., took a house in Cheshire for the holidays, which belonged to Lord Combermere. She had with her a few unopened packages of Paget plates, so as to take some photographs which would serve as mementos of her stay. On

December 5th, shortly after her arrival, she took a photograph of the library, and, much to her astonishment, discovered that a spirit-form, with a beard, but possessing no legs, appeared in the negative seated on the arm of Lord Combermere's own chair. Much impressed, she asked Professor Barrett to investigate the matter. He first of all found out from Miss D. that her plate had been exposed for about fifteen minutes, but she was pretty sure that she had not left the room, and that no one had come into it. Professor Barrett, however, was not satisfied; so he interviewed the servants, among whom he found a young footman of about the same proportions as the spirit-form in the photograph. But whereas the latter had a beard but no legs, the former had legs, but no beard. This young man, on cross-examination, admitted that he might have entered the library about the time the photograph was taken, but denied that he had sat on the chair. So Professor Barrett determined to take a photograph himself of the library; and, while the plate was exposed, he got a friend to come into the room, sit on the arm of the chair, look up at the camera, cross and uncross his legs, and then walk out of the room. The result was a negative containing a spirit-form almost identical with that of Miss D.'s photograph, so that Professor Barrett was satisfied with a natural explanation of the phenomenon, viz., that the footman had come into the library and sat on the arm of the chair, then, on looking up, and seeing a camera pointed full at him, had hastily got up and gone out of the room. And Miss D., on further cross-examination, admitted that she may perhaps have left the room for a short time. The absence of legs in the spirit-form was the result of the legs being crossed and not kept still, while the head was moved just enough to give a blurred effect sufficiently lifelike to be mistaken for a beard. Now, I must draw attention to the remarkable coincidences of this story, the chances against the occurrence of

which are obviously enormous. At the time that Miss D.'s photogaph was being taken, Lord Combermere was being buried. And he had met his death in a rather unusual way. A dray had knocked him down in Knightsbridge, inflicting very severe injuries. He was at once taken to a hospital, where his legs were amputated and he died shortly after the operation. Lastly, as a sequel to this story, it is interesting to hear that some relative of Lord Combermere saw the photograph, and, without knowing Professor Barrett's explanation, recognised the spirit-form as that of Lord Combermere, who, I omitted to say, wore a beard. (See also article in *Westminster Gazette*, for December 9th, 1907.)

The question then we must ask is, whether telepathy or coincidence is the more probable explanation of dreams and hallucinations, which by no means always synchronise with the event perceived, but take place sometimes before it and sometimes after it. If it is telepathy, the influence, whatever it is, must be held to be hanging about both before, at the time of, and after the event, provided that this explanation is applied to all cases of dreams and hallucinations. But if it is not telepathy, "it may be urged," as Andrew Lang says, "many hallucinations occur and many deaths. People only remember the hallucinations which happened, or were made by erroneous calculation to seem to happen, coincidentally with the deceaes of the person seen. . . . The coincidental hallucinations have certainly a better chance of being remembered, while fancy is apt to exaggerate the closeness of the coincidence. Nothing can demonstrate that coincidences between death and hallucinations occur more frequently than by the doctrine of chance they ought to do, except a census of the whole population." [1] In many cases the coincidence between the experience and the event is not so remarkable as is usually supposed. Here is a suggestive

[1] *See* article "Psychical Research" in "Encyclopædia Britannica," Ed. X., vol. xxxii., p. 51.

example, showing how much is left to fancy in the telling of experiences supposed to prove a supernatural explanation.

> "A prominent Chicago journalist, Mr. F. B. Wilkie, reported that his wife asked him one morning in October, 1885, while still engaged in dressing, and before either of them had left their sleeping-room, if he knew anyone named Edsale or Esdale. A negative reply was given, and then a 'Why do you ask?' She replied:—'During the night I dreamt that I was on the lake-shore and found a coffin there, with the name of Edsale or Esdale on it, and I am confident that someone of that name has recently been drowned there.' On opening his morning paper, the first item that attracted his attention was the report of the mysterious disappearance from his house in Hyde Park of a young man named Esdale. A few days afterwards the body of a young man was found on the lake-shore." (Quoted in "Occultism and Common-Sense," p. 65.)

This story is so told as to lead one to fancy that the lady had the dream at the time that the young man was drowned. But from the details given it is impossible to say whether he died at the time of the dream or before or after. And of course it would make the coincidence much more remarkable, and so improbable as an explanation, if exact synchronism between the dream and the young man's death were established.

How much need there is for being sure of the facts and leaving nothing to fancy is shown by the above account of a spirit-photograph and also by the following story of a spirit-photograph described by Mr. Podmore.

> A chapel was photographed, and when the plate was developed, a face was faintly seen in a panel of the woodwork, which the photographer recognised as a young acquaintance who had not long since met with a tragic death. "In fact," writes Mr. Podmore, "when he told me the story and showed me the picture,

I could easily see the faint but well marked features of a handsome, melancholy lad of eighteen. A colleague, however, to whom I showed the photograph without relating the story, at once identified the face as that of a woman of thirty. The outlines are in reality so indistinct as to leave ample room for the imagination to work upon; and there is no reason to doubt that, as in the ghost of the library, the camera had merely preserved faint traces of some intruder who, during prolonged exposure, stood for a few seconds in front of it." ("Modern Spiritualism," ii., p. 125.)

Lastly, in some cases where it seems remarkable that a particular person was the subject of a dream or hallucination, it is not so remarkable as at first sight appears. A train of thought once started may assert its existence long afterwards by influencing the complexion of a dream or hallucination, just as a suggestion made in the hypnotic trance may produce results long afterwards. And many people have some subconscious worry and yet will tell you they have not thought of the matter for weeks. Thus, in the case of Lord Charles Beresford already quoted, he knew that his father was ill, even if he was not consciously fretting about the matter. Consequently it is quite intelligible how a subconscious train of thought may have affected him, so as to have given him a vision of his father lying in a coffin. And the fact that he had his experience about the same hour as his father was buried—not when his father died—is to my mind in favour of coincidence rather than of telepathy as an explanation of the phenomenon.

As an example of the influence of subconscious impressions, the following instance is very suggestive, and bears on the subject of trance-utterances, with which I shall deal shortly.

Stainton Moses was a clergyman and master at University College School, London, and therefore may be regarded as unlikely to have consciously deceived.

He appears to have had remarkable mediumistic powers, among others, that of receiving messages from the dead. But, as Mr. Podmore points out, "all the spirits indeed gave their names with one exception—an exception so significant that the case is worth recording. The *Pall Mall Gazette* for February 21st, 1874, contains the following item of intelligence. 'A cab-driver out of employment this morning threw himself under a steamroller, which was being used in repairing the road in York Place, Marylebone, and was killed immediately.' Mr. Moses was present at a séance that evening, and his hand was controlled ostensibly by the spirit of the unhappy suicide to write an account of the incident, and to draw a rough picture of a horse attached to a vehicle. The name of the dead man it will be seen does not appear in the newspaper account, and out of the thirty-eight spirits who gave proofs of their identity through the mediumship of Mr. Moses, this particular spirit alone chose to remain anonymous." ("Modern Spiritualism," ii., p. 283.)

Even Gurney was much impressed by the unexpectedly large proportion of cases where the percipient informed him that there had been a compact between himself and the deceased person, that whoever passed away first should try to appear to the other. "Considering," he adds, "what an extremely small number of persons make such a compact compared with those who do not, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that its existence has a certain efficacy." [1]

Now, it is clear, from the mere fact that such a compact has been made, that the parties thereto have been thinking

[1] *See* "Phantasms of the Living" by Gurney, Myers, and Podmore, vol. ii., p. 66. The paragraph continues: "The cause of this might be sought in some quickening of the agent's thought in relation to the percipient as the time for fulfilment approached. But . . . the efficacy of the compact may quite as readily be conceived to depend on its latent place in the percipient's mind as in the agent's."

and worrying over the subject of life after death, and so it is not remarkable if this train of thought colours an hallucination or neurasthenic feeling of uneasiness, which happens to coincide more or less with the death of the other party to the compact.

As regards experimental cases of telepathy, I have never yet seen any evidence such as will satisfy a scientific standard of truth, though some of the results are distinctly striking. Yet in experiments carried out for this purpose such a proof should be possible.[1] Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick—and later Miss Johnson—carried on a long series of experiments in 1889-1891 in order to test the possibility of transferring a mental picture from one mind to another. Anyone who reads the details will see how far from concluisve were the results.[2]

[1] For a discussion of the reliability of such experiments see Appendix R.

[2] *See Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. vi., p. 398, and vol. viii., p. 554. The results at once became poorer, if the agent and percipient were separated by a wall or a floor. However, it is only fair to point out that this fact does not necessarily exclude telepathy being given as the explanation of the more or less successful results when agent and percipient were in the same room. For, as Podmore says: "It seems scarcely possible to attribute these results to hearing, with whatever degree of hyperæsthesia we may credit Miss B.; but it should be mentioned that a further series of four hundred trials, in which Miss B. was separated from the agent by two closed doors instead of one, or was placed in a different building, yielded practically no success. In an experiment depending on purely physical conditions we should, no doubt, be justified, after such a failure, in inferring that the results were directly affected by the distance or the intervening obstacles, and were therefore due to some mechanical cause, which had escaped the attention of the observer. But in this investigation we have of course to deal with very delicate living machinery, and it seems not improbable that the obstacle in these later trials was not the second closed door, but Miss B.'s weariness, or the more tedious nature of the experiments themselves, owing to the difficulty of communication between the experimenters or Miss B.'s preconceived belief that under such stringent conditions she must fail. A self-suggestion of the kind, as is well known, may be all powerful with hypnotised persons. For since there are numerous later experiments, in which ideas have apparently been

Of professional "thought readers" the Zancigs may be quoted as leading exponents of the art, though they were careful not to use the word "telepathy," but restricted themselves to saying that they found they had a wonderful power of reading each other's thoughts, and that they had developed this power by practice.[1] Their perform-

conveyed telepathically a much greater distance, a distance in some cases measured by hundreds of miles, it seems incredible that the slight alteration in the physical conditions can really have had anything to do with the success. But the circumstance will serve to illustrate the difficulties attending experimental investigation in these obscure psychological by-paths." ("Telepathic Hallucinations," p. 53.)

In the more recent experiments of Miss Miles and Miss Ramsden in 1907 it is surprising, or at least unfortunate, that, if they have such a telepathic faculty as is claimed for them, they have not performed more experiments. For those recorded do not amount to fifty; and, though the complete failures are not numerous, there are several which it is difficult to call successful. (*See Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. xxi., p. 60, and *Journal S.P.R.*, June, 1908.)

[1] In an interview, Mr. Zancig is reported, in the *Daily Mail* for December 6th, 1906, to have said: "I can't explain it; I don't know why we can do it, nor how we do it; all I know is that within certain lines we can do certain things which nobody else seems able to do as well. It is not clairvoyance, has no manner of connection with it, it is not anything but transference of thought or brain impressions from one to the other; that is all we really know about it. And, I repeat, we attained our present imperfect power by long, hard practice." He also reiterated his previous statement that the object of his wife and himself was to entertain and make a little money. But although his object was to make money, he never would accept any of the challenges offering to pay him large sums of money, if he and his wife succeeded under "test" conditions. Thus, the *Throne* for February 16th, 1907—after quoting Mr. Zancig's words: "If I were in America and my wife was left in South Africa, she could read my thoughts as accurately as she could on the stage, if only she knew at what time the transference of thoughts was to be made,"—offered to pay £5,000 to King Edward's Hospital Fund, or £100 to Mr. Zancig himself, if some words written by the Duke of Argyll on a card could be transmitted by Mr. Zancig to Mrs. Zancig "under simple conditions made by ourselves."

For a fuller criticism of the Zancigs' performance, *see* William Marriott's article in *Pearson's Magazine* for October, 1910.

ance included the following type of experiment. While Mr. Zancig stood among the audience and held some object handed to him by one of the audience, Mrs. Zancig on the stage described it. Again, if Mr. and Mrs. Zancig were provided with two copies of the same book, and if Mr. Zancig concentrated his mind on a passage in his copy of the book, Mrs. Zancig could read the passage out of her copy. Their performance was certainly extremely clever. Mrs. Zancig succeeded in rightly naming the most unlikely things handed to her husband, so that there are only two possible explanations, viz., telepathy or the use of a code. Which is the more probable explanation may be gathered from the following facts and criticisms. (*a*) When they came to Cambridge they were provided with two copies of a book, which, unlike most books, had unnumbered pages. Under these conditions Mrs. Zancig was unable to reproduce the passage her husband was thinking of. (*b*) Stuart Cumberland in the *Daily Mail* of December 8th, 1906, describes some of the phenomena he witnessed at a performance, among others, how a paper cracker cap was handed to Mr. Zancig. "Mrs. Zancig pronounced it to be a 'dress-sample' at first, and then, on being told she was wrong, said it was a cap (not a paper cap). Now, a brain-wave could not have communicated 'dress-sample' by any chance in mistake for a rolled-up paper cap. Mr. Zancig might have been in doubt for a moment, but could not have sent the brain-wave message of 'dress-sample.' Again, a gold medallion was called at first a 'hat.' Mr. Zancig must have grasped the nature of the article in an instant, and 'hat' on the brain-wave theory is absurd, but a misread, over-hasty code-word explains all." (*c*) Mr. M. H. Spielmann in the *Tatler* for January 23rd, and 30th, 1907, also gives excellent examples of where the code fell short, and further mentions a case strongly suggestive of collusion. He says:—"On January 3rd, as reported in the *Daily Mail*, a cigarette case was handed to Mr. Zancig, and was at once stated to be a cigarette case containing seventeen cigarettes. This was before

it was opened, so that the number was unknown to Mr. Zancig, who states formally and precisely that he can only transfer knowledge he himself possesses. As there is no suggestion that the owner could similarly transfer his thoughts, even if he was aware of the number of cigarettes, the whole occurrence detaches us from the idea of thought transference and lands us in the realm of collusion." (*d*) Sir Oliver Lodge, in the *Daily Mail* of December 6th, 1906, is reported to have said :—" For my part I am inclined to think that the performance is the result of a trick. In all the cases of thought reading which we have investigated and considered genuine hitherto, the influence has not been under the control of the mediums and capable of being produced whenever desired, but has been a spontaneous and involuntary one. That is what leads me to suspect the present case."

I have dwelt at almost unnecessary length on the Zancigs,—seeing that there can be no reasonable doubt they employed a code,—because they excited a great deal of interest at the time and took in completely the average man interested in the occult, but with no special training for its investigation. Thus, W. T. Stead wrote in the *Review of Reviews* (xxxiv., 592, December, 1906) :—" I can say without hesitation that the Zancigs at the Alhambra Music Hall give a more conclusive demonstration of the power of telepathy than is to be found in all the literature of the subject. On each of the two occasions on which I experimented with them in private, the results were the same as those to be witnessed by anybody at the Alhambra. The only difference was that at the experiments in private I had ample opportunity to impose conditions which rendered fraud or trickery impossible." Mr. Stead's attitude is also typical of the man who believes in a medium after he has been exposed, because next month, finding that the Zancigs had meanwhile been more or less exposed by professional conjurers, he wrote :—" They do not claim that they use telepathy. They shrink from any explanation, and I shrewdly suspect they occasionally use code-signals and other little tricks

in order to give investigators something to go upon, and so keep up the interest in their show." (*Review of Reviews*, xxxv., 46, January, 1907.)

I now come to those cases of supposed telepathy in which, by means of automatic writing or trance utterances, certain mediums or clairvoyants claim to transmit messages from the dead. I have already referred to Mr. Stainton Moses, and pointed out that, of thirty-eight spirits who revealed their identity through his agency, *that one alone* remained silent, whose name Mr. Moses did not know beforehand. Assuming Mr. Moses to have been what I may call a genuine medium, this instance suggests very strongly that on one occasion at any rate Mr. Moses was himself the unconscious victim of self-deception, and that the information supplied by his hand was information he had already gathered from the *Pall Mall Gazette* or other paper, that is, in the ordinary way through his senses.[1] It is interesting to point out, for those who believe in telepathy between living minds, that this very belief cuts at the root of disembodied spirits being able to prove their existence. Thus Andrew Lang says:—"As to cases of isolated phantasms of the dead, it is admitted on all hands that sane and sober people may have subjective hallucinations of the presence of living friends not dying or in any other crisis. Obviously,

[1] I have already pointed out in the last chapter, in a note on p. 89, how planchette reproduced some information known to a friend of mine which he had forgotten.

Another excellent example of the same phenomenon is referred to by Podmore as follows: "A writer in the *North American Review*, April, 1855, relates that a medium of his acquaintance, a lady of "transparent ingenuousness," produced three poems purporting to have been written by the spirit of John Milton One of these poems was headed "A Latin Sonnet"; it was not a sonnet, nor was it written in Latin, or in any other language but it had throughout a Latin sound, and the terminations were all Latin. The explanation, no doubt, is to be found, as the reviewer suggests, in the fact that the lady's father had for years prepared young boys for college, and she herself had probably in her youth often heard Latin read aloud." ("Modern Spiritualism," vol. i., p. 262.)

then, the appearance of a dead person may equally be an empty hallucination. Thus a member of the House of Commons, standing at the entrance of a certain committee-room, saw another member, of peculiar aspect and gait, pass him and enter the room, his favourite haunt. Several hours passed before the percipient suddenly recollected that the other member had been dead for some months. Even superstition cannot argue that this appearance was a ghost. . . . Telepathy cuts both ways. It is, if accepted, a singular discovery, but it throws an enormous burden of proof on a 'ghost,' who wants to establish his identity. In the same way telepathy cuts at the root of 'clairvoyance.' For the same reasons the information nominally given by 'spirits' of the dead through the mouth or by the automatic writing of Mrs. Piper may be explained by telepathy from the living who knew the facts. In Dr. Hodgson's present opinion the dead do communicate through Mrs. Piper. The published evidence does not seem to justify this conclusion, which is not accepted by Mrs. Piper herself." [1]

[1] "Encyclopædia Britannica," Ed. X., vol. xxxii., p. 52. Undoubtedly the messages received both from Mrs. Piper's "trance-controls" and also through the writing of other automatists, such as Mrs. Verrall and Mrs. Holland, cannot be dismissed as unworthy of very serious investigation, seeing that they contain interesting examples of superficially inexplicable subconscious phenomena and constitute what Professor Barrett calls the "small residue of phenomena," which he finds inexplicable on any other hypothesis than that of discarnate human beings, that is to say, the spiritualistic hypothesis (*see* Introduction to "Occultism and Common-Sense," by Beckles Willson). Thus, one of Mrs. Piper's best successes occurred with Sir Oliver Lodge, who handed to her a watch which had belonged to an uncle of his named Jeremiah. Thereupon facts in the early life of this uncle were mentioned, which, according to Sir Oliver Lodge, were unknown to any one present at the sitting (*see* "Survival of Man," p. 223). However, even if we exclude telepathy as an explanation, there are great difficulties about accepting the spiritualistic hypothesis. For it would imply that a departed spirit more or less haunts any property which had belonged to it on earth, in just the same way as the spirit of Mrs. Shaler's aunt talked through Mrs. Piper, when she held in her hand a seal which

Mrs. Piper is perhaps the most famous of this kind of medium; for not only does she transmit messages from the dead, but she professes to be able to supply information about people unknown to her. Therefore a few words about her mediumistic powers seem necessary here; though I would refer the interested reader to my essay on the subject in Appendix Q. She has convinced many apparently keen observers; and there is no question of the difficulty of invoking anything so simple as fraud to explain the source of the knowledge occasionally exhibited by her trance personalities. But in spite of this, there is no satisfactory proof that fraud is always impossible. This possibility is well expressed in a letter from Professor Shaler to Professor James as follows:[1]

"My Dear James,

"At the sitting with Mrs. Piper on May 25th, I made the following notes.

"As you remember, I came to the meeting with my wife; when Mrs. Piper entered the trance-state,

had belonged to the departed lady, as described on the next page. Thus, to my mind, preparation for the sitting on Mrs. Piper's part, or hints unconsciously given by the sitter, still appear much the most probable explanations, even though we are told that the normal Mrs. Piper is much respected by all her friends, and has never been detected in fraud, and that Dr. Hodgson for some time employed detectives. But it is to be remembered that an adequate *scientific* investigation of Mrs. Piper has never been made, and that the moral standard of Mrs. Piper's secondary consciousness may be very different from that of her normal life. *See* Appendix Q.

[1] I have quoted this letter because it summarises rather well the impressions made on an unbiassed observer, and because it was used for the same purpose by Podmore in "Modern Spiritualism," but it should be realised that, while giving a fairly typical account of the kind of information which Mrs. Piper imparts to her sitters, it gives no idea of the fishing, guessing, and other modes of acquiring information that are employed by the entranced medium. Only a stenographic or verbatim report can do this. For a discussion of the importance of what Podmore calls the "stage setting of the trance," *see* Appendix Q.

Mrs. Shaler took her hand. After a few irrelevant words, my wife handed Mrs. Piper an engraved seal, which she knew, though I did not, had belonged to her brother, a gentleman from Richmond, Virginia, who died about a year ago. At once Mrs. Piper began to make statements clearly relating to the deceased, and in the course of the following hour she showed a somewhat intimate acquaintance with his affairs, those of his immediate family, and those of the family in Hartford, Connecticut, with which the Richmond family had had close social relations. The statements made by Mrs. Piper, in my opinion, entirely exclude the hypothesis that they were the results of conjectures, directed by the answers made by my wife. I took no part in the questioning, but observed very closely all that was done.

"On the supposition that the medium had made very careful preparation for her sittings in Cambridge, it would have been possible for her to have gathered all the information which she rendered by means of agents in the two cities, though I must confess that it would have been rather difficult to have done the work.

"The only distinctly suspicious features were that certain familiar baptismal names were properly given, while those of an unusual sort could not be extracted, and also that one or two names were given correctly as regards the ceremony of baptism or the directory, but utterly wrong from the point of view of family usage. Thus the name of a sister-in-law of mine, a sister of my wife, was given as Jane, which is true by the record, but in forty years' experience of an intimate sort I never knew her to be called Jane; in fact, I did not at first recognise who was meant.

"While I am disposed to hold to the hypothesis that the performance is one that is founded on some kind of deceit, I must confess that close observation of the medium made on me the impression that she was honest. Seeing her under any other conditions,

I should not hesitate to trust my instinctive sense as to the truthfulness of the woman.

"I venture also to note, though with some hesitancy, the fact that the ghost of the ancient Frenchman who never existed, but who purports to control Mrs. Piper, though he speaks with a first-rate stage French accent, does not, so far as I can find, make the characteristic blunders in the order of his English words which we find in actual life. Whatever the medium is, I am convinced that this "influence" is a preposterous scoundrel.

"I think I did not put strongly enough the peculiar kind of knowledge that the medium seems to have concerning my wife's brother's affairs. Certain of the facts, as, for instance, those relating to the failure to find his will after his sudden death, were very neatly and dramatically rendered. They had the real-life quality. So, too, the name of a man who was to have married my wife's brother's daughter, but who died a month before the time fixed for the wedding, was correctly given, both as regards surname and Christian name, though the Christian name was not remembered by my wife or me.

"I cannot determine how probable it is that the medium, knowing she was to have a sitting with you in Cambridge, or rather a number of them, took pains to prepare for the tests by carefully working up the family history of your friends. If she had done this for thirty or so persons, I think she could, though with some difficulty, have gained just the kind of knowledge which she rendered. She would probably have forgotten that my wife's brother's given name was Legh, and that of his mother Gabriella, while she remembered that of Mary and Charles, and also that of a son in Cambridge, who is called Waller. So, too, the fact that all trouble on account of the missing will was, within a fortnight after the death of Mr. Page, cleared away by the action of the children, was unknown. The deceased is represented as still

troubled, though he purported to see just what was going on in his family.

"I have given you a mixture of observations and criticism; but let me say that I have no firm mind about the matter. I am curiously and yet absolutely uninterested in it, for the reason that I don't see how I can exclude the hypothesis of fraud, and until that can be excluded, no advance can be made.

"When I took the medium's hand, I had my usual experience with them—a few preposterous compliments concerning the clearness of my understanding, and nothing more." (*Proceedings S.P.R.*, vol. xiii., pp. 524, 525.)

Fraud is indeed so possible that one cannot be too careful about being convinced by evidence associated with professional mediums.[1] As Podmore says in his "Modern Spiritualism" (vol. ii., footnote on p. 339):—"There is a belief, no doubt well founded amongst the more clear-headed American Spiritualists, that there is an elaborate organisation for obtaining and interchanging information thus acquired amongst all the members of the guild. It is perhaps in this way that we may explain the peculiar good fortune of well-known Spiritualists in obtaining 'tests.' Some of Mrs. Piper's sitters had previously visited other mediums, but if the precautions

[1] In illustration of this point I hold it as extremely probable that this is the explanation of an experience recorded in *Light* for March 21st, 1908, p. 136. As the experience is too long to be quoted here, I have given it in Appendix K, where I have added some critical remarks.

In the case, however, of Mrs. Piper, my own attitude towards her powers is that there is no need to invoke the assistance of an "information-bureau" or of agents employed by her, to explain her success; and, in addition to this, the testimony in favour of her honesty is so unanimous and of so good a quality, and in some cases the difficulty of collecting information without the sitter's assistance was so great, that any *organised* system of fraud may be dismissed as a most improbable hypothesis. But I have fully discussed the whole question of the mediumship of Mrs. Piper in Appendix Q.

taken to prevent her knowing the names of the sitters were effectual, as they probably were in most cases, it seems hardly likely that she could have utilised any information thus gained." And, though Podmore's attitude on the subject of Mrs. Piper is summed up in the following sentence :—" The conviction entertained by those who are best qualified to judge that Mrs. Piper's information was not obtained by such methods is based partly on the precautions employed, partly on the nature of the information itself," yet there are definite suspicious circumstances about some of her sittings apart from the indefinite impression of fraud produced by a " control " like Dr. Phinuit. The best examples of these within my knowledge occurred on the following occasions [1] :—

(1) At a sitting given by Mrs. Piper to Professor Hyslop, an uncle of his named James McClellan, professed to communicate with him. This uncle's father was named John McClellan. Now, among other information the " control " said that his father had gone to the war and lost a finger. These statements were not true of James McClellan's father, but were true of a neighbour with the same name, who had lived within a few miles of James' father ; and this other John is mentioned in the published history of the county. (*Proc. S.P.R.*, xvi., pp. 110, 470, 535.)

(2) At a sitting given by Mrs. Piper to Professor Bowditch and his sister-in-law in 1886 (this was after Mrs. Piper had been unable to keep a first appointment owing to indisposition) they heard a number of spirit-names, " Sally," " Jane," etc., which meant nothing to them. Finally Mrs. Piper said :—" I hear a name,—well—well—Dixwell—the first name is Anna," and she gave a more or less accurate account of the death in Paris of a cousin of Professor Bowditch, named Anna Dixwell, adding :—" Tell my mother, your sister, that I am well and happy." This she repeated. Then followed :—" Your father is here, and he wishes me to tell you that he is pleased with you, and glad you are doing

[1] For other examples *see* Appendix Q.

so well. I see him sitting with his books around him."

The connection of all this with Professor Bowditch was not apparent; but on the way home it occurred to his sister-in-law that Mrs. Piper had mistaken Professor Bowditch for his uncle, Henry I. Bowditch, to whom the remarks did apply. (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. viii., p. 7.)

(3) Podmore writes, in his last book, "The Newer Spiritualism," p. 161:—"Amongst recent communications from the entranced Mrs. Piper the attempts at translating the Latin message—to be discussed later—point most strongly to what may be called illegitimate sources of information. As will be seen, the translations given in the trance are difficult to reconcile either with the theory of communications from the dead, or that of telepathy from the living. Another suspicious incident is the mistranslation of *mori*."

On the other hand, it is often said, as a strong point in favour of Mrs. Piper's genuineness, that Dr. Hodgson, after years of investigation, pronounced his conviction that she was controlled by "discarnate intelligences," and that he was an observer of exceptional acuteness, as shown by his exposure of Madame Blavatsky. But even at that earlier time he declared that whatever prepossessions he may have had "were distinctly in favour of occultism and Madame Blavatsky"; so that he may not unfairly be considered as slightly biassed in favour of a supernormal explanation of the phenomena he was investigating, phenomena in the record of which auto-suggestion is particularly liable to blind the eyes. Indeed, he may almost be compared to the members of the Commission who were sent out by the S.P.R. in 1908 to Italy to investigate the supernatural powers of Eusapia, and who, in spite of considerable personal knowledge of and skill in conjuring, were taken in by her superior skill, as already described. In any case, whatever be the explanation of Mrs. Piper's successes, there is one striking coincidence about many of them, namely, that very little convincing evidence is afforded at the first sitting, and that the

success is often associated with knowledge which slowly accumulates and only assumes an apparently supernormal character in the course of subsequent sittings, as for example in the case of Sir Oliver Lodge's Uncle Jerry, in the "Lethe Incident," etc.[1]

And further, the fact that Mrs. Piper often holds the hands of her sitter lends probability to the view that in the trance she has a faculty for reading subconscious muscular expressions of emotion or thought—analogous to, if much more highly developed than, the faculty by which professional thought-readers respond to the guidance of any one who concentrates his mind on a hidden object—and that by a skilful process of "guessing" and "fishing" she sometimes worms more out of her sitters than appears to them conceivable.[2]

As a summary, then, of the phenomena exhibited in Mrs. Piper's trances, we may say that, for the man who has some definite standard of truth, they cannot be cited as a proof of the existence of discarnate spirits. For, to quote what is practically the last utterance of Podmore on the subject:—"The trance personalities have never told us anything which was not possibly, scarcely anything which was not probably, within the knowledge of some living person. None of the 'posthumous' letters have yet been read. . . . Nor has the Hodgson Control

[1] The "Lethe Incident" is described in *Proc. S.P.R.*, pt. lx., vol. xxiv., p. 86, March, 1910: "the case of Uncle Jerry" in *Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. vi., pp. 498-550.

[2] Such, at any rate, is the opinion of many of Mrs. Piper's sitters, who had no reason for being biassed in favour of the supernormal. Thus Dr. C. wrote the following note on his sitting, held in Prof. Lodge's house on December 23rd, 1889 (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. vi., p. 497): "The trance state seemed natural; but had more voluntary movement than I had ever seen in an epileptic attack. The entire change in Mrs. Piper's manner and behaviour is unlike an intentional effect, and it is possible she herself believes that the conditions mean something outside of herself. With regard to the results, the misses seem to balance the hits, and the 'reading' is not so impressive as the 'sitting.' After reading over your notes, I think they consist of a certain amount of thought-reading and a large amount of skilful guessing."

yet revealed the secret of his cipher." ("The Newer Spiritualism," p. 312.) And as regards giving telepathy as an explanation, I think that this chapter will have shown that, while the evidence is so conflicting, an agnostic attitude is still the most reasonable; though, even if it is ultimately necessary to admit the existence of knowledge obtained by Mrs. Piper otherwise than through her five senses, and invoke telepathy as an explanation, this means nothing more than believing in the existence of vibrations in the ether, resulting from and acting on nervous matter. Such a faculty, if it exists, might perhaps be compared with the "home-ing instinct" in birds, and might be regarded as a vestigial instinct inherited from our animal ancestors.

PRAYER

" Every belief of man is in the last analysis amenable to reason, and finds its origin in evidence that can appeal to the arbitrament of common-sense.

" This evidence may, in certain cases, consist chiefly of the fact that generalisations of our predecessors have taken a certain view regarding a certain question ; indeed, most of our cherished beliefs have this foundation.

" But when such is the case, mankind has never failed in the long run to vindicate its claims to rationality by showing a readiness to give up the old belief, whenever tangible evidence of its fallaciousness was forthcoming." (H. S. Williams, " Encyclopædia Britannica," Ed. X., vol. xxvii., p. xiii.)

CHAPTER V

Prayer

In the last chapter, I dealt with the subject of telepathy at considerable length, because belief in the efficacy of prayer rests on exactly the same type of evidence as belief in the existence of telepathy. To some readers prayer may appear both such a sacred subject and so obviously established that to compare it to telepathy may seem stupid and irreverent, just as I heard the remark made about Archdeacon Colley that he was a fool to think mediumistic evidence of the supernatural would strengthen belief in the reality of Christ's Resurrection. But people who adopt this attitude show that the groundwork of their belief is formed by their own personal feelings and experience, and takes no account of evidence. For if it were possible to get evidence which suggested to the unbiassed mind the probability of telepathy, it would at once establish a probability in favour of prayer, which in its essence is an effort of the mind directed towards getting into communication with the Divine Mind.

I do not propose to give here a single instance of prayer being answered, although I know of many remarkable genuine experiences, which at first sight would seem to establish the supernatural efficacy of prayer. I admit such experiences occur, just as dreams and waking hallucinations occur and sometimes coincide in a striking way with the event perceived. The efficacy of prayer, of course, is not susceptible of scientific proof, because theologians tell us that requests for material objects are not suitable subjects for prayer, and an answer to

a spiritual request is so difficult to determine or measure.[1] When we come to probability, there is no *a priori* argument against the possibility of prayer being answered, but the scientific evidence, as far as it goes, shows that very few prayers are answered : and in the case of prayers for material things like rain, food, the cessation of tempests and earthquakes, the proportion of prayers which apparently are answered is universally admitted to be very small indeed. It is useless to discuss the question at all with any unreasoning biassed believer in prayer, who one minute quotes some story, in which a starving widow and children are marvellously provided with food after

[1] A good example both of the logical application of belief in the power of prayer and also of the difficulty of proving or disproving its efficacy is afforded by an incident from the "Life of Anna Kingsford," by Edward Maitland (London, Redway, 1896). This lady, when she was living in Paris, was very much concerned by the accounts she heard of the cruelties supposed to be practised by the physiologists in the course of their experiments on living animals; and Claude Bernard in particular excited her hatred with the following result: "And seeing in Claude Bernard the foremost living representative and instrument of the fell conspiracy at once against the human and the divine, to destroy whom would be to rid the earth of one of its worst monsters, she no sooner found herself alone than she rose to her feet, and with passionate energy invoked the wrath of God upon him, at the same time hurling her whole spiritual being at him with all her might, as if with intent then and there to smite him with destruction." Claude Bernard actually died rather suddenly about that time, an occurrence which seemed to her a direct answer to her prayer, for she said: "It has been strongly borne in on my mind . . . that he has indeed come to his death through my agency." But even so, while anticipating further successes, she was not free from doubts, as shown by her attitude in saying: "If it prove that I really possess such a glorious power, woe be to the torturers! God willing, what a murrain there shall be among them! Oh, I will make it dangerous, nay, deadly to be a vivisector! It is the only argument that will affect them. Meanwhile, thank God, the head of the gang is dead. And if it be that I have been the instrument, thank God all the more for that! I shall not have come into this hell of a world in vain!" (Vol. i., pp. 259, 260.) For further remarks on this subject, *see* Appendix L.

praying for it, as a proof of the efficacy of prayer, and the next minute says material things are not suitable subjects for prayer; or who retorts that man cannot criticise the workings of the Divine Will, when you quote instance after instance of prayers which were not answered. It is like tossing up a coin, and saying, "Heads I win, tails you lose." Therefore I assume that anyone who reads this chapter will try to be sufficiently unbiassed to weigh the evidence and arguments for and against prayer.

Prayer from the earliest recorded times has been a human tendency. Of that there is no doubt. Now at first sight it seems a good theoretical argument in favour of prayer to point out, as Dr. Gore has done,[1] that where a human faculty exists it must correspond to some external reality, just as the retina of the eye and visual apparatus correspond to the ether vibrations which underlie the passage of light from a luminous object. And that this faculty can be developed by practice, just as vision or hearing becomes acuter with practice, is a natural development of the argument. But the same sort of argument might be applied to the faculty with which the priests of certain primitive races are endowed, of becoming possessed with the spirit of an ancestor or a deity. For instance in Mariner's "Tonga" are recorded several instances of this faculty, of which the following account is typical:—

> "As soon as they are all seated, the priest is considered as inspired, the god being supposed to exist within him from that moment. He remains for a considerable time in silence, with his hands clasped before him, his eyes cast down and motionless. During this time the victuals are being shared out, and the cava preparing, and the matabooles begin to consult him. Sometimes he answers them, at other times not; in either case he remains as formerly. Frequently

[1] "Prayer and the LORD'S Prayer," pp. 11, 12, by Charles Gore, D.D., Bishop of Oxford.

he will not utter a word till the repast is finished, and the cava too. When he speaks, he generally begins in a low and very altered tone of voice, which gradually rises to nearly its natural pitch, though sometimes a little above it. All that he says is supposed to be the declaration of the god, and he accordingly speaks in the first person as if he were the god. All this is done generally without any apparent inward emotion or outward agitation; but on some occasions his countenance becomes fierce, and, as it were, inflamed, and his whole frame agitated with inward feeling. He is seized with a universal trembling, the perspiration breaks out on his forehead, and his lips, turning black, are convulsed; at length tears start in floods from his eyes, his breast heaves with great emotion, and his utterance is choked. These symptoms gradually subside. Before this paroxysm comes on, and after it is over, he often eats as much as four hungry men under other circumstances could devour. Then it being now gone off, he remains for some time calm, then takes up a club that is placed by him for the purpose, turns it over and regards it attentively; he then looks up earnestly, now to the right, now to the left, and so on, for several times. At length he suddenly raises the club, and, after a moment's pause, strikes the ground or the adjacent part of the house with considerable force. Immediately the god leaves him, and he rises up and retires to the back of the ring among the people. . . .

"It might be supposed that this violent agitation on the part of the priest is merely an assumed appearance for the purpose of popular deception, but Mr. Mariner has no reason at all to think so. There can be but little doubt but that the priest, on such occasions, often summons into action the deepest feelings of devotion of which he is susceptible, and by a voluntary act disposes his mind as much as possible to be powerfully affected; till at length what began by volition proceeds by involuntary effort, and the

whole mind and body become subjected to the overruling emotion. But there is nothing new in all this. Ancient times, as well as modern, afford numerous instances of this nature; and savage nations, as well as civilised, display ample testimony that false religions and false notions of religion act upon some minds with such extraordinary impulses, that they are mistaken for divine inspirations." ("Mariner's Tonga Islands," by John Martin, vol. i., pp. 101, 102.) And again:—

"It happens in the Tonga Islands that persons who are not priests are often visited by the gods, particularly females, but who are never affected in the manner above described." [The previous paragraphs dealt with the inspiration of the Tongan priests.] "They are generally low-spirited and thoughtful, as if some heavy misfortune had befallen them. As the symptom increases they generally shed a profusion of tears, and sometimes swoon away for a few minutes. The height of the paroxysm generally lasts from a quarter to half an hour. These are also called fits of inspiration, and are firmly believed to be visitations from some god who accuses the party of neglect of religious duty, not by an apparent audible warning, but by an inward compunction of conscience. But these things are also common enough in all parts of the world, at home as well as abroad. Some of the natives are such adepts at this sort of mysterious conversation with the divinities that they can bring on a fit of inspiration whenever they feel their mind at all so disposed. Mr. Mariner, indeed, did once witness a rare instance of a man who was disappointed in this particular. Finding himself, as he thought, about to be inspired, some cava was brought to him (as is usual on such occasions), but, in a little while, he was obliged to acknowledge that the god would not visit; at which all present were greatly surprised, and the cava was taken away again. . . . Now that we are upon this subject, it may not be amiss to mention Finow's

son, who at this period of our history was at the Navigation Islands, and used to be inspired by the spirit of Toogoo Ahoo, the late king of Tonga, who, it may be recollected, was assassinated by Finow and Toobó Nuha. When this young chieftain returned to Hapai, Mr. Mariner, who was upon a footing of great friendship with him, one day asked him how he felt himself when the spirit of Toogoo Ahoo visited him. He replied that he could not well describe his feelings; but the best he could say of it was, that he felt himself all over in a glow of heat, and quite restless and uncomfortable, and did not feel his own personal identity, as it were, but seemed to have a mind different from his own natural mind, his thoughts wandering upon strange and unnatural subjects, although perfectly sensible of surrounding objects. He next asked him how he knew it was the spirit of Toogoo Ahoo, and his answer was:—'There's a fool! How can I tell you how I knew it; I felt and knew it was so by a kind of consciousness; my mind told me that it was Toogoo Ahoo.' Finow used occasionlly to be inspired by the ghost of Moomooi, a former king of Tonga." ("Mariner's Tonga Islands," by John Martin, vol. i., pp. 103-105.)

Priests possessed with this faculty undoubtedly are under the impression that they are possessed with a spirit of some kind, which comes into them in answer to prayer. At any rate, the suppliant comes to the priest with a request or prayer, which presumably is transmitted through the priest to the deity. Here, then, one might think that the faculty for becoming "possessed" corresponded to some external reality. And many a Christian finds nothing difficult in such a belief with the addition that the possessing agent is a devil or spirit of darkness. Now, as a matter of fact, there is no doubt that these phenomena have a perfectly natural explanation, and are the result of auto-suggestion, leading to uncontrolled activity of the lower centres correlated with

the so-called "subconscious or subliminal self." Andrew Lang has put this very well where he says[1]:—"The popular savage and ancient theory of 'automatism' phenomena was that the people thus affected were inspired by a god or spirit, or 'possessed' by a demon or a dead man. Science now regards the gods or demons or spirits as mere exhibitions of the secondary personality. The knowledge and faculties of the secondary personality, far exceeding those exhibited in the normal state, are explained to a great extent by the patient's command, when in the secondary state, of resources latent in the memory. . . . A similar kind of automatism is revealed in the inspirations of genius, which often astonish the author or artist himself."

Thus, Dr. Gore's argument, at first sight plausible, will not stand examination, and, as a matter of fact, mental phenomena like prayer are not comparable with sensory phenomena, associated as these are with definite organs situated in the exterior of the body for the purpose of yielding information of the surrounding world. For no analogous organs situated in the interior of the body or elsewhere and correlated with the so-called "spiritual world" have been discovered. Also, Dr. Gore's comparison of prayer to the retina of the eye is one which would never be made by a man trained in physiology and psychology, and knowing in consequence the relative value of different phenomena.

Further, as the student of ethnology knows, there can be no doubt, that, though prayer among most savage races is a human tendency,[2] the savage's attitude towards

[1] *See* article "Psychical Research," "Encyclopædia Britannica," Ed. X., vol. xxxii., p. 53.

[2] Prayer, however, is by no means an universal phenomenon, for the Polar Eskimos have no prayer in their religion. Mr. Knud Rasmussen, who has lived among them, has recently published his observations in a book entitled "The People of the Polar Night." From this it is clear that such religion as they have is entirely based on spiritualism. Their one fear is that of offending the powers which have the guidance of natural phenomena; and their magicians alone are supposed to be able

prayer is often very different from that of the Christian. Among many savages prayer is only a sort of incantation, a rite for pacifying the supernatural powers which are believed to dwell in various objects like the sun, trees, stones, etc. Thus in an early edition of "Old New Zealand" there is recorded in the Introduction an interesting experience of Judge Maning, which illustrates very well the value attached by the Maoris in their old fighting days to prayer as an incantation. He says :—

> "I was here at the time when both the Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries were first beginning to make their way in the country, and the Maoris of my tribe used to come to me and ask me which had the greatest 'mana' (*i.e.* prestige), the Protestant God or the Romanist one. I was always a good churchman, and used to tell them that the Protestant God could lick the other into fits. There was an old Irish sailor about five miles from me who used to back up the Roman Catholic God, but I had a long start of him, and moreover was the best fighting man of the two, which went a long way. In a short time I had about 200 of the most muscular, bloodthirsty, hard-fighting Protestants you could wish to see.
>
> "Well, it so happened that one day we had a little difference with some of our neighbours, and were drawn up on one side of a gully all ready to charge. I had been put in command of the desperate young bloods of the tribe, and burned to distinguish myself, feeling the Commander of the Old Guard at Waterloo quite an insignificant person in comparison with myself in point of responsibility and honour.
>
> "Lying down in the fern, we waited patiently for the signal to charge ; had not we on the last occasion worth speaking of outrun our elders and been nearly

to command the spirits. Consequently, they believe that the supernatural forces must either be obeyed or subdued, and that they cannot influence them by prayer.

decimated in consequence? Shall it not be different now? See! There is the great war-chief, the commander of the 'Taua' (war-party) coming this way (he was a real 'toa' of the old stamp, too seldom found among the degenerate Maoris of the present day). Little cared he for the new faith that had sprung up in the last generation; his skill with the spear, and the incantations of his 'Tohungas' (priests of the Maoris) had kept him safe through many a bitter tussle; his 'mana' was great. Straight to me he came and addressed me thus:—'Look here, young fellow! I've done the incantations and made it all square with my God; but you say that you've got a God stronger than mine, and a lot of our young fellows go with you. There's nothing like having two Gods on our side, so you fellows do the proper business with Him, and then we'll fight.' Could anything have been more practical and business-like than this? But I was stuck up; for, though I myself could have repeated a prayer from the liturgy, my worthy converts, who philosophically and rightly looked upon religion merely as a means to an end (*i.e.* killing the greatest possible quantity of enemies), were unable to produce a line of Scripture amongst them.

"There was an awkward pause; our commander was furious. Suddenly one discovers that he has a hymn-book in his pocket. General exultation! 'Now,' cries the old chief, foaming at the mouth with excitement, 'go down upon your knees (I know that's the custom with your God) and repeat the charm after him. Mind you don't make a mistake, now, for if one word is wrong, the whole thing will be turned topsy-turvy, and we shall be thrashed.'

"And then, having repeated one hymn word for word on our knees, I and my converts charged and walked into the Amorites no end; but whether it was the hymn or the fighting that did it is of course an open question to this day."

The fact is that the more ignorant man is, the more is he liable to be the victim of superstition and have his life made burdensome by the supposed necessity for pacifying imaginary supernatural beings. Not understanding the forces which surround him—the nature of thunder, the facts of astronomy, etc.—he attributes the phenomena of nature to beings whose good-will he feels it wise to propitiate, instead of trying to understand the laws of nature and adapt himself thereto. Superstition of this kind is by no means peculiar to savages; many half-educated Christians look upon the world in much the same way. Thus it is recorded of the Curé of Ars,[1] that he used to teach his parishioners that earthquakes and volcanic eruptions were sent as the result of sin. Similarly, on the day of the Messina earthquake, early in 1909, the priest who preached in the cathedral at Taormina told a crowded congregation that the earthquake had been sent because no preparations had been made for keeping the feast of St. Pancrazio next day.[2] Such preaching is by no means surprising, while the Christian Churches still teach as fact the legend of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and that it occurred as a punishment of man's wickedness.

Prayer, then, among many savages is but little more than an incantation; and priests or chiefs serve the purpose, as in the Christian Churches, of prescribing the ritual and the form of the incantations, and to a certain extent of mediating between the common people and their fears. Thus among the Maoris, if anyone desecrated what was "tapu," like a burial-place, and became himself "tapu," a tohunga or Maori priest prescribed a course

[1] "Life of the Curé d'Ars," p. 81, from the French of the Abbé Alfred Monnin (London, Burns and Oates, Ltd.): "It is sin, my children, which brings all calamities upon us, and every kind of scourge—war, pestilence, famine, earthquakes, fire, hail, storms, tempests—everything which brings suffering and distress upon us."

[2] *Nineteenth Century*, April, 1909, p. 663, "Some Personal Experiences of the Great Earthquake," by the Hon. Alexander Nelson Hood.

of treatment which would appease the wrath of the offended powers.[1] And where prayer among savages ceases to be an incantation, and approaches to a more or less humble request for some benefit, it is a privilege reserved to a chief or to some one who can make payment to the God (or rather to his priest). Thus in Mariner's "Tonga" are recorded several instances of sick chiefs or their children being carried about from one priest to another in the hope that their supplications for the recovery of the patient would be heard by at least one of the Gods.[2]

When prayer begins to be more than a mere incantation, it occupies itself with material objects like health, victory, wealth, etc. It is only as man's mind is evolved, and, with increasing cerebral development and knowledge, mental, or so-called spiritual, benefits are valued, that man begins to pray for mental qualities, like generosity, "tenderness of heart," humility, etc. And even now man is not very different from the young child or savage. Whenever he is in difficulties or sorrow, he readily relapses into a tendency to appeal to some unknown force to help him out of his difficulty, a tendency inherited from the days when, ignorant of the laws of nature, he developed a superstitious habit of mind instead of adapting himself to his environment and making the best of conditions by his own intelligence. Thus Bishop Gore, in his book on prayer, tells us[3] how, in Australia, where they have secular education, some years ago a favourite school-teacher was ill, and a notice was put in the papers suggesting that at a certain hour throughout the country all school-teachers should write up on the blackboard the sentence:—"Our Father which art in Heaven, grant

[1] "Old New Zealand," pp. 109-135, by F. E. Maning (Smith Elder & Co., 1863 edition). On p. 124 the author describes how he himself broke the tapu connected with touching a dead chief, and how difficult it was to get himself purified again; the account of the inconveniences, to which he was put meanwhile, being very interesting and amusing.

[2] Mariner's "Tonga," vol. i., pp. 288-302.

[3] *Loc. cit.*, p. 79.

that our dear master and beloved friend . . . may be restored to health," for the children to repeat. He cites this as evidence that when in difficulties even the hardened secular mind is softened and turns to God for help. To my mind it is rather evidence that man, when in difficulties, readily forgets the facts of life and becomes a sort of superstitious savage once more.

At the same time, who cannot sympathise with man's feeling of weakness in the face of the dread forces which surround him—gravity, electricity, earthquakes, tempests, disease, etc.—and with the very natural tendency to fly for help to some supposed higher power? But history proves that the lot of man has gradually improved, not by relying on the help of supernatural beings, but only in so far as he has used his own intelligence patiently to master the facts of life and adapt himself to his environment, as witness the advances in medicine, surgery and hygiene of recent years. However, this subject is too vast to enter into here, though it would be very interesting to point out in detail how care of the sick, poor and aged, together with that of criminals and the insane, have all improved since man began to realise the nature of the social community and how treatment dictated by reason rather than by theological authority alone was likely to do good. Thus—taking the case of insanity—for centuries, while dogmatic ideas ruled the field, insanity was treated as the result of "possession" by evil spirits. Even to this day, in Sicily, at Calatabiano, the lunatics are brought out on May 15th, the feast of San Filippo, and have their heads knocked against the church-wall, to drive out the evil spirit.

Now we must go back to the subject of this chapter—the evidence for prayer. Personally I have a good deal of sympathy with Archdeacon Colley, when he tried to get evidence of the supernatural by means of a medium in order to strengthen the case for the credibility of Christ's resurrection. He only forfeits my sympathy in so far as he showed himself foolishly gullible and meddled in matters for the observance of which he had

undergone no special training, and in consequence showed a total ignorance of the value of evidence. Similarly, I sympathise with any attempt to get evidence in support of prayer. For prayer may be regarded as a kind of telepathy between a human mind and a Divine Mind. And so all that I have said about the value of evidence for telepathy is relevant to prayer. But in the case of prayer there is even less evidence than there is for telepathy, because so many instances of answers to prayer, which might be quoted as tending to support this type of telepathy, deal with facts which were known to some human mind, and so admit the possibility of their merely being cases of telepathy between two human minds. Consequently, possible cases of what I will call "divine telepathy" are extremely rare; and in fact I only know first-hand of one genuinely good case—that of my friend, Dr. S., who gave me the following account of his experience for publication:—

> "One Saturday (in November, I believe, and about 1902) I had left the Research Department, of which I am superintendent, of the Royal Arsenal at about 4 o'clock, and gone across to Buckhurst Hill for the week-end. At about 7 p.m. I began to feel that something was wrong at the Arsenal, and this feeling increased so that at about 8.30 p.m. I decided to go and see. On arriving there, I went through the various laboratories, etc., until I came to the 'Oven Room'—a room in which explosives are kept in ovens, the atmospheres of which represent the climates of the worst stations of the world, both as regards temperature and humidity. These ovens are heated by gas. On entering, I found the whole room full of gas and two or three burners still alight, the flames from which were lurid and blue and licked up round the sides of the ovens owing to the large percentage of gas in the air. Probably a few seconds would have seen the whole place blown to pieces. Indeed, an explosion was obviously imminent. I at once made my way to the

other end of the room where the livid flames still burned, and extinguished them by placing my hand over the burners; by so doing I was just in time to prevent an explosion which would have wrecked the buildings. The gas would have caused the various explosives undergoing trials to explode also.

"*Explanation*: Owing to some cause—possibly the sticking of a valve at the gas factory, or the opening of a large main—a sudden fluctuation of gas pressure occurred in the pipes; this caused all the very small flames to go out; indeed all except the two largest and strongest flames. The ovens under which the flames had gone out cooled down, and consequently the regulators allowed a full supply of gas to flow to the burners which had gone out. Gas thus flowed into the room from some fifteen or sixteen burners, and soon filled the room with an explosive mixture of gas and air. The two burners which were not extinguished continued to burn, and would undoubtedly have caused an explosion as soon as the requisite ratio of gas to air was reached. That this was very nearly reached on the moment of my entering, is plainly evident by the appearance of the flames, which were three or four times their proper sizes and kept licking up round the sides of the ovens, whilst small flames kept detaching themselves.

"*Commentary*: The subject—the oven room—is inanimate, and could not therefore be the cause of the presentiment. We must therefore either admit the direct hand of Providence or hold that the whole thing was a matter of chance. Against this last must be said I am not subject to these feelings of uneasiness, and have never been to see to things of this sort before or since." (Dated September 11th, 1906.)

It will be seen that he does not rashly give a supernatural explanation of his experience and realises the possibility of coincidence; but I may add that the experience has made such an impression on him that he

resents the subject being treated with sceptical levity. Personally, I have no doubt that he was the subject of a neurasthenic wave of anxiety, which, as I mentioned in the last chapter, is by no means as uncommon as is generally supposed, and that this happened to coincide with the incidents at Woolwich recorded in his experience.

A propos of supposed instances of divine guidance, I think the following story, quoted for many years by my mother, will be very instructive; as, contrasted with a very similar type of story told by the late Baron Huddlestone, it shows the need for extreme caution in accepting as trustworthy apparently valuable evidence. This is the story as told by my mother :—

The Dream of Mr. Shepheard.

" The following narrative relating to a dream has appeared in print on more than one occasion, with some slight variations from the form in which I now give it. But as the story is authentic, and as it came at first hand from the gentleman who had the dream to my great-aunt, I feel confident that the following is the true version.

" Mr. Shepheard, a woollen manufacturer in what was considered in those days a large way of business, lived in Plymouth towards the close of the eighteenth or the beginning of the nineteenth century. He possessed land adjoining what is now known as Sutton Road, the memory of which fact is preserved in the present name of Shepheard's Lane, which turns out of this road towards the railway bridge. He lived on this property in a house which was afterwards used as a nunnery and now forms part of a factory. He was a good man, and much respected in the town and as an employer of labour.

" He woke one night and roused his wife to tell her that he had had a very weird dream, leaving a strong impression on his mind after his waking that he must go to Launceston, which was then the assize town for the county of Cornwall, but for what reason he did

not know. Mrs. Shepheard tried to persuade him that his impression was the mere result of fancy, as he knew no one there, and had no business to call him to that place, and after a time her husband fell asleep. It was only to have a repetition, however, of his previous dream, which he again told his wife. Once more she endeavoured to soothe him and induce him to go to sleep. At length he slept again, and the third time the pressing duty of going to Launceston was laid upon his mind by the recurrence of the dream. He determined to go there, got up and saddled his horse (his men not being yet about, and those not being the days of railways) and set off on his journey. When he got a considerable distance on the way to Launceston, as he was crossing a part of the moor, the thought struck him that it was extremely absurd for him to take such a long ride, about thirty miles, on what looked like a 'fool's errand,' and he turned his horse's head towards Plymouth. But he found that his mind became so greatly burdened and distressed that he could not continue his homeward course. He resumed his journey, and at length arrived at the little town and put up his horse at the White Hart Hotel, and when he had taken some refreshment he did not know what to do next, as he was not acquainted with a single person in Launceston. Going to the stables to see after his horse, he asked the ostler whether there was anything going on in the town. The ostler replied that the assizes were being held there in the Castle that day, and that there was a trial for murder going on. Mr. Shepheard thought he would fill up his time by going to the court to hear what it was about. Just as he entered the court, the judge was asking the prisoner at the bar if he had anything to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon him. The charge against the prisoner was for the murder of a little girl at Penzance at a specified time. The prisoner looked round the court and said:—
'Yes, my lord, a gentleman has just come in who can

save my life if he chooses.' The judge told the prisoner to point him out, and he pointed at once to Mr. Shepheard. The latter was accordingly put into the witness-box, and asked if he knew the prisoner. He was a kind-hearted man, and it was with great reluctance that he answered:—'I am very sorry, my friend, but I have never seen you in my life before to-day.' The man said:—'I think I can recall myself to your recollection. Do you not remember that I met you in Sutton Road in Plymouth on such a day?' (mentioning the date of the murder). Mr. Shepheard said regretfully:—'No. I have no recollection of the circumstance whatever.' The prisoner said:—'You took a little red book out of your waistcoat pocket and put down in it my name and address with the date, saying that you had no work for me at present, but that you might have some at a future time.' Mr. Shepheard remarked:—'Well, that is a habit of mine, and I have the little book in my waistcoat pocket now.' It was produced, and the prisoner's name written in it, together with the date, which was that of the very day on which the murder was committed in Penzance. It was simply impossible in those days of slow transit for the man to have committed the murder at Penzance and to ask for work at Plymouth on the same day. An *alibi* was clearly proved, and the life of an innocent man was saved, although the circumstantial evidence was strongly against the prisoner. Mr. Shepheard knew well enough why he had been so strongly impelled to go to Launceston."

The above account was given to my mother by a gentleman who lived for some years in the house where Mr. Shepheard was supposed to have had the above dream. He prefers his name not to be mentioned; but I may say that he had the story from his mother, who had it from her aunt, to whom Mr. Shepheard is said to have related the experience himself. I gather that the

story was only orally transmitted through three generations.

Here is the story told by the late Baron Huddlestone. It is taken from a book entitled "The Story of Crime," by H. L. Adam, p. 295 (T. Werner Laurie).

"Some years ago, when robbery was regarded as a capital offence, a man was charged with the crime, which was coupled with violence. During the course of the trial a stranger called at a neighbouring inn, who apparently was holiday-making. He questioned the landlord as to whether there were any places of interest he might visit in the neighbourhood, and the landlord replied that there was the assize court close handy, and that he should be pleased to obtain admission for him through the medium of a friend of his, who was an usher there. The visitor accepted the offer, and they accordingly were admitted to the court. At that moment the prisoner, who was charged with robbery with violence, had been convicted, and was being asked by the judge whether he had anything further to say, when he replied that he was innocent, and that at the time of the occurrence he was miles away from the place. The judge commented that he was unable to prove this, when the prisoner suddenly caught sight of the stranger just entering the court, and pointing to him, exclaimed:—'Yes, there's a man that can prove it. Ask him. On the day in question, I carried his portmanteau on to a vessel at Dover. It came open and a toothbrush fell out, and I put it back after it had been wiped. Ask him.' The stranger, who appeared taken aback by this sudden recognition, was referred to, and said he was unable to remember the incident at the moment, but that if he were allowed to refer to his diary he would be able to say for certain. His diary was fetched from the inn, and the date of the crime was turned up, when sure enough there was an entry in confirmation of the prisoner's story. Upon the

strength of this the prisoner was discharged. Subsequently, however, both men were hung for sheep-stealing. The visitor to the inn was merely a confederate and the *alibi* was a 'got-up' affair."

Prayer, then, like telepathy, cannot be proved or disproved in the scientific sense; and the evidence for prayer, judged by a scientific standard of truth, is even less strong than that for telepathy between human minds, so that an agnostic attitude is the only satisfactory one for a rational man, unless probability on general grounds is strengthened by some theoretical argument, as there is no *a priori* argument against a supernatural explanation of prayer, when it is efficacious. But, as I have indicated in this chapter, general arguments drawn from history, ethnology, psychology, and physiology are distinctly against such an explanation.

Every one of course will judge for himself. I personally have a minimum of doubt about asserting that prayer has never altered the course of nature, or influenced the mind of any one at a distance, who was unaware that he was being prayed for. But, in saying this, I should be very sorry to discourage any one from the habit of prayer, provided it was intelligently undertaken in such a way as not to check self-reliance. Nothing could be more sensible than that a man, when he is in difficulties, should quietly retire by himself and concentrate his mind on the subject, so as to decide how best to act; that is, most reasonably and wisely. And if any one is anxious about a friend's welfare, prayer, in the sense of considering how one can best act for the said friend's benefit, can do nothing but good. Also sometimes, if the friend knows you are praying for him, this very fact may be of the greatest encouragement and support to him. How often has one heard of a man in later life attributing his success in the battle against evil to his mother's prayers! In this sense—implying nothing supernatural or weakening to a man's own self-reliance—prayer is wisely

practised by everyone and is a most reasonable expression of our deepest feelings and wishes :

> "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire
> Uttered or unexpressed ;
> The motion of a hidden fire,
> That dwells within the breast."
>
> —JAMES MONTGOMERY.

But to pray for a safe journey for oneself or a friend is only a survival of superstition. The best kind of prayer on such a subject is to meditate how one can take the wisest precautions to avoid accidents. And it is a curious commentary on the weakness of human nature and the want of logic shown by feeble minds, that often those dear people, who talk most about having faith in the guidance of a higher hand, are the most nervous and fussy about the danger of accident in whatever they do.

I think it quite likely that many a reader may say at this point : " I admit the apparent truth of what you have written, but, in my own experience and in the lives of various saints I have known or have read of, prayer works, and a particle of practice is worth any amount of theory." To any such reader I should like to point out that in the above remark there is a confusion of ideas. I do not deny that prayer works. I have only been arguing that there is no convincing evidence for, and much to be said against a supernatural explanation of the efficacy of prayer. There is no doubt in fact, that, if a man believes he is under the guidance of a higher hand, it often gives him a confidence and courage which may enable him to overcome almost insuperable difficulties. There is no doubt that prayer sometimes works. But when we can get hold of the facts of any one experience and analyse them, we find that the man who prays has nearly always given the credit for the successful result of his prayer to a supposed higher being instead of to his own intelligence, which he was subconsciously giving an opportunity to act, by showing self-control enough to meditate or pray how best to act in accordance with God's will (that is wisely and for his own good or that of others),

instead of rashly hurrying into action. Thus Mohammed gave all the credit for his safety to Allah, when his own intelligence prompted him to fly from Medina to Mecca.

A still better instance, illustrating what I mean, is recorded in the life of Pastor Hsi,[1] a Chinaman who died a few years ago. We read that he was suddenly called to a village one day to adjust a dispute between two of his Christian converts, one of whom had been seriously injured by the other. When he arrived, he found the men standing in the centre of an angry crowd, who were taking the part some of the one man, some of the other. Every one expected him to rebuke the principals for having fought and so scandalously set at nought the Christian precept of loving one another. But, instead of doing so, he said nothing, and retired to a distance to pray; then, when he came back, having been "directed" what to do, he straightway proceeded to bind up the wounded man's leg. This was the wisest thing he could have done under the circumstances, and resulted in his becoming a peacemaker. The mere fact that he regarded his action as under the direction of God does not exclude the natural explanation that his conscious or subconscious mind, being given time to consider the problem, arrived at the wisest solution. This is a good example of the right sort of occasion for prayer, and is not very different from the attitude of any experienced doctor towards a case requiring delicate treatment, although the doctor is more conscious than Pastor Hsi was of the operation of his own judgment, and does not attribute his action to the guidance or direction of a supernatural being.

[1] "Pastor Hsi, one of China's Christians," pp. 107-113, by Mrs. Howard Taylor (London, Morgan & Scott).

MIRACLES.

" The conception of the constancy of the order of Nature has become the dominant idea of modern thought. Whatever may be man's speculative doctrines, it is quite certain that every intelligent person guides his life and risks his fortune upon the belief that the order of Nature is constant, and that the chain of natural causation is never broken." (Huxley, " Essays," iv., 47, 48.)

CHAPTER VI

MIRACLES

IN the last chapter I stated that I had a minimum of doubt in making the assertion that prayer had never altered the course of nature. And, to illustrate what I mean, I cannot quote a better example than the Jewish legend relating how the sun and moon stood still in response to Joshua's prayer to Jehovah, while the Israelites finished off the pursuit of the Amorites (Joshua x., 12). Miracles in fact, of which this is a typical instance, admit of adverse criticism far more easily than telepathy or prayer. Thus, for instance, in this legend it would be easy to ask, among other questions, what prevented Joshua and the other inhabitants of the earth from flying off into space at a tangent when the earth suddenly stopped rotating—as implied by the statement that the sun stood still. However, such a question would certainly appear irrelevant to a believer in miracles, because any one, who can let himself believe in the greater phenomenon of the earth being suddenly stopped in its rotation, would naturally find no difficulty in believing that lesser phenomena, like the movements of the people on the earth, were included in the greater, although they are not mentioned.

The word *miracle* is not altogether easy to define, especially when it deals with vital phenomena, which lend themselves with far more difficulty to scientific and experimental observations than physical phenomena, as, for instance, in the case of miracles concerned with the cure of disease, the casting out of devils, etc. But for practical purposes a miracle may be defined as an occur-

rence reputed to have taken place contrary to the scientific reasoning and general experience of mankind at the present day.[1] For example, it is the general experience of mankind that when human beings are dead they cannot be restored to life, in spite of the assertion of "Bishop" Oliver C. Sabin, "founder of the Evangelical Christian Science Church," that his wife, Mary Cordelia Bent Sabin, actually died in 1908, three weeks before the world knew it, and that she came back to life through the efficacy of his prayers, although she ultimately died on May 6th, 1908.[2]

I do not think that any intelligent reader will be impressed by "Bishop" Oliver C. Sabin's assertion, preferring to think that he was not a competent observer, rather than that an event occurred in the year 1908 so contrary to the experience of other weak human beings, many of whom have prayed with agonised intensity, but without

[1] *See* article "Huxley" ("Encyclopædia Britannica," Ed. X., vol. xxix., p. 371). "Hume had defined a miracle as 'a violation of the laws of nature.' Huxley refused to accept this. While on the one hand he insists that 'the whole fabric of practical life is built upon our faith in its continuity'; on the other, nobody can presume to say what this order of nature must be. 'This knocks the bottom out of all *a priori* objections, either to ordinary miracles or to the efficacy of prayer. If by the term miracles we mean extremely wonderful events, there can be no just ground for denying the possibility of their occurrence.'

"The credibility of miracles with Huxley is a question of evidence."

Huxley's Essay entitled "The Value of Witness to the Miraculous," and those dealing with the Gadarene swine, such as "Agnosticism," "Agnosticism and Christianity," etc., show very clearly how worthless is the evidence for many of the best known miracles.

[2] From the *New York Sun*, May 12th, 1908: "I heard the death-rattle in her throat, and she died three weeks before the world knew it," said Bishop Sabin. "She died. There was no breathing. I got down on my knees and lifted my voice to God to restore her to me. I needed her. She was my other self, and I prayed day and night to God not to take her away. The Giver of all good heard my prayer. She was returned. She did breathe and talk, but she wanted to die."

success, that dear ones might be spared to them. Thus in this, as in all miracles, the question turns on the matter of evidence, and whether the event may be regarded as reported by competent observers. In fact, so weak and limited are man's powers and knowledge that where he has been unable by scientific methods of observation and verification to establish so-called laws, like that of gravitation, there is no *a priori* argument against belief in any miracle dealing with other than purely physical phenomena; and, as Huxley pointed out, the credibility of miracles is a question of evidence. ("Essays" v., 133).

The "stigmata" of St. Francis may be taken perhaps as the classical example of miracle in mediæval times, and so I have discussed the question in Appendix P. Paul Sabatier, with his poetical mind, seems to me to miss the point that the whole question turns on the reliability of evidence, when he writes :—

> "The question changes its aspect if we call miracle, as we most generally do, all that goes beyond ordinary experience. Many apologists delight in showing that the unheard of, the inexplicable, are met with all through life. They are right, and I agree with them, on condition that they do not, at the close of their explanation, replace this new notion of the supernatural by the former one.
>
> "It is thus that I have come to conclude the reality of the stigmata. They may have been a unique fact without having been more miraculous than other phenomena; for example, the mathematical powers or the musical ability of an infant prodigy." (English translation, p. 434, "Life of St. Francis of Assisi"; Hodder & Stoughton, 1908.)

For we should not accept the mathematical powers or musical ability of an infant prodigy as proved, if the evidence to the fact were not exceptionally strong, which it is not in the case of the stigmata.

The subject of miracles is very extensive, but for the Christian reader those connected with the life of Jesus

Christ, as narrated in the Gospels, are of transcending interest; and in particular the Incarnation and Resurrection. I do not intend to discuss the question of the Incarnation in this chapter, as obviously the evidence for it from a scientific point of view must be limited, and belief in it rests probably more on other grounds than on the historic and scientific accuracy of the statement attributed on this matter to Mary, the wife of Joseph.[1]

As regards the Resurrection of Jesus, I do not intend to enter into questions more suited to the theologian or the historian as to the date and authorship of the Gospels, etc., and I am prepared to assume that our account of the Resurrection rests on the evidence of genuinely honest men living at the time of Jesus' Crucifixion. At the same time we must consider the mental development of these men. There can be no question that Christ's disciples, like He Himself, and like any Jew brought up to believe in the divine mission of the Jews and the sacred character of their history, found no difficulty in believing in a miracle, even in such a definite one as the answer to

[1] The idea of an incarnation once having been admitted to the mind as a possibility, it is not a far step to being a genuine believer in a specific instance of incarnation. Thus, in New Zealand recently, a partially educated and Christianised Maori, named Rua, who wanted to benefit the condition of the Maori race, became a sort of prophet. In an interview published in the *Hawke's Bay Herald*, June 15th, 1908, he said: "I was born just over forty years ago at Maungapohatu beyond Waikare-Moana. My mother, Harai, was engaged to be married to a man called Kenana, but before they could be married he went off to the wars and was killed, and three years after I was born. Kenana was only my father as Joseph was the father of Christ. My people rejected me, and I was homeless," etc.

In the case of Buddha, he himself made no claims to divine powers, and recognised the natural relationship to his parents. Yet, as Professor Rhys David says in his article on "Buddhism" ("Encyclopædia Britannica," Ed. IX., vol. iv., p. 429): "In one or other of the Buddhist books are found the following ideas. Gautama himself became regarded as omniscient, and as absolutely sinless; he was supposed to have descended of his own accord from heaven into his mother's womb, and to have had no earthly father."

Joshua's prayer already referred to. Thus the reader, remembering what I said in Chapter II. on the value of evidence, will readily admit that these witnesses were distinctly biassed observers.[1] Again, though we are told that only after His death and Resurrection did they understand His numerous references to "rising again the third day," yet the Gospel account leaves no doubt that the days preceding the Crucifixion were days of mental expectation and strain, and that they expected something to occur. At this distance of time I do not pretend to be able to explain from the limited facts at our disposal exactly how the belief in the Resurrection and Ascension came about, any more than I can explain exactly how the accounts of various miracles in the history of Buddha's life have arisen.[2] The parallelism between the lives and teachings of Buddha and Christ will forcibly strike the mind of any reader who is capable of taking a comparative

[1] This fact is luminously expressed by Paul Sabatier in the following sentence: —"Several centuries ago visual delusion was with adults what it is now with children in remotest country parts. A quivering leaf, a nothing, a breath, an unexplained sound creates an image which they see and in the reality of which they believe absolutely." ("Life of St. Francis of Assisi," p. 190.)

[2] Many writers have discussed the materials out of which the account of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ arose, and have drawn a picture, which satisfies the reason, showing how easily a myth about the Resurrection could grow. Of these writings, Reimarus' "Von dem Zwecke Jesu und seiner Junger," Strauss' "Das Leben Jesu," Bauer's "Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte der Synoptiker," Renan's "La Vie de Jésu," Volkmar's "Jesus Nazarenus und die erste christliche Zeit," Weiss' "Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes," and, in England, Seeley's "Ecce Homo" are among the most important. A full account of the efforts, made during the past century and a half to give an historical picture of Jesus, is contained in Schweitzer's recent book "The Quest of the Historical Jesus" (Translation by W. Montgomery. London, A. & C. Black, 1910).

One of the most important results of all this criticism is the admission that corruption is the only certain proof of death, and that consequently the evidence for the death of Jesus on the Cross is extremely defective. On these lines Huxley gives a most

view of religions, and will incline his mind to ask if there is not a similar parallelism between the miracles which accumulated around Buddha's life after his death and those ascribed in the Gospels to Christ. But whatever arguments may be used in support of Christ's Resurrection, I do maintain that the evidence for it is no better than that for miracles reported to have taken place either in the lives of many saints—for instance, in that of the Curé of Ars,[1]—or at Lourdes within our own time. In fact,

probable account of the origin of the story of the Resurrection in his Essay, entitled, "Agnosticism, a Rejoinder" (vol. v.).

A most interesting example of the commencement of a Resurrection myth is before our eyes at the present time, in the year 1911 A.D. For the death of Mrs. Eddy, founder of the Christian Science Church in America, is being made the occasion of suggesting that a resurrection of her material form will shortly occur. For further details, *see* Appendix M.

[1] "La Vie du Curé d'Ars," by the Abbé Alfred Monnin (popular edition in English, published by Burns & Oates, Ltd., London).

Jean Baptiste Vianney, better known as the Curé of Ars, was born in 1788 and went to the little lonely village of Ars in the south of France, as curé, when he was thirty years old. He was a simple earnest man, the son of poor farmers, with little education, who devoted himself so whole-heartedly to religious exercises that his reputation for saintliness gradually spread far outside this quiet corner of France, and, from about the year 1825 till the time of his death in 1859, it became the habit with large numbers of Catholics to make a pilgrimage to Ars, notwithstanding its isolation and the difficulties of getting there, to be confessed by this saintly man.

A great number of unusual incidents are recorded in this most interesting life; but perhaps those, most suggestive of miracles recorded in Scripture, are the following two: (1) With the gifts of grateful pilgrims he started an orphanage; but, as the money given was spent as it came in and no permanent provision for the support of the orphanage was made, it happened on several occasions that he had no money with which to buy food for the orphans and the "sisters" who looked after them. On one of these occasions, we read, the sisters came to him and asked him what they were to do, as they had only a handful of flour left. He told them to have faith and proceed as if they had any quantity of flour. They forthwith obeyed him, and made "ten large loaves of from 20 to 22 lbs. each, as much in fact as could have been made with a whole sack of flour." (2) On another occasion

the evidence for the Lourdes miracles is more satisfactory, as the witnesses of these miracles are some of them still living, and it is possible to get a more detailed and critical account of what they think they saw. Thus the author of "*La Vraie Bernadette*" points out how many trustworthy persons have testified to seeing the hand of the peasant girl Bernadette resting in the naked flame of a burning candle for some fifteen minutes without injury, while she was ecstatically wrapped up in a vision of the Virgin Mary.[1] These visions, forming a series, in the course of which the Virgin Mary is reported to have revealed to the pure and humble-hearted, but ignorant, girl Bernadette the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, occurred in the year 1858, so that they are near enough to our own time to enable us to know a good deal about the character of the witnesses of the supposed facts, and far enough off to get a true perspective of the occurrence. And there can be no doubt that these witnesses are as trustworthy as those for the Resurrection of Christ; so that the only

of a similar nature he asked them if they were sure there was no food left anywhere in the house, and they said they had looked everywhere, even in the corners of the loft, in the hope that a little corn in an old bag might have been overlooked. So he told them to have faith while he looked once more himself; and we read that, when he mounted the ladder to the loft and looked in, he found "the granary was full, as if corn had been thrown into it by sacksful."

The good curé always attributed this miracle to St. John Francis Regis, but the critical reader will suspect, I think, the girl who made the bread of being the responsible agent in both cases.

[1] "*La Vraie Bernadette*," p. 126, by Monsignor Ricard, Vicaire Général d'Aix (Paris, E. Dentu, second edition, 1894).

À propos of the miracles of Lourdes, two passages from Huxley are worth recalling, namely: "When a man testifies to a miracle, he not only states a fact, but he adds an interpretation of the fact. We may admit his evidence as to the former, and yet think his opinion, as to the latter, worthless" (vol. v., p. 187). And: "Beyond question, there is as good, or perhaps better, evidence of the miracles worked by our Lady of Lourdes, as there is for the floating of Elisha's axe, or the speaking of Balaam's ass" (vol. v., p. 339).

logical position for any one who believes in the Resurrection on grounds of evidence is that of also believing in these miracles at Lourdes.[1] At the same time, a man, who believes in the Resurrection of Christ on general grounds rather than on those of evidence, may logically reject the supernatural nature of the so-called "Miracles of Lourdes," just as I myself have no doubt that they are the result partly of bad observation and partly of exaggeration or misconception. However, as before pointed out, it is impossible to arrive at the solution of this kind of problem according to a scientific standard of truth, because the phenomena are not capable of repetition, and the supposed facts are of the nature of a single experience and rest on the evidence—to put it mildly—of untrained and biassed observers. Therefore the question of probability must be argued on other grounds as well.

Before doing so, however, it is desirable to examine one argument which at first sight seems very conclusive to the mind longing to find good grounds for the belief in the supernatural divinity of Christ, inculcated since childhood: an argument, on which Archdeacon Farrar mainly relies when he discusses in his "Life of Christ" the question of miracles. The substance of this argument is as follows: It is true that many of the miracles in the life of Christ might be susceptible of a natural explanation, if we knew all the facts; and similarly, if we knew more

[1] So-called miracles undoubtedly take place at Lourdes; but belief in their supernormal character depends on bias, and they may be paralleled by examples which to a Catholic are not so edifying and therefore not convincing. The following quotation gives an excellent illustration of this:—"Heretics often took advantage of this thirst for the marvellous to dupe the Catholics. The Cathari of Moncoul made a portrait of the Virgin, representing her as one-eyed and toothless, saying that, in his humility, Christ had chosen a very ugly woman for mother. They had no difficulty in healing several cases of disease by its means; the image became famous, was venerated almost everywhere, and accomplished many miracles, until the day when the heretics divulged the deception to the great scandal of the faithful.—Egbert von Schönau Contra Catharos, Serm. I., chap. 2." ("Life of St. Francis of Assisi," by Paul Sabatier, p. 192, footnote.)

about the universe, we might not find a belief in the Incarnation and Resurrection so difficult. So why worry ourselves over these miracles when they are all equalled, if not surpassed, by the miraculous and transcending fact of the sinlessness of Jesus Christ, of which there can be no doubt ? [1]

This statement certainly seems more or less convincing at first ; but alas ! on examination, we find that the very fact is taken for granted which is under discussion, viz., the miraculous sinlessness of Jesus Christ's life. For, *in the first place,* sin is one of the most difficult things to define, and the tendency of expert medical opinion at the present day is to regard sin and ignorance as interdependent. *Secondly,* taking the ordinary popular view of sin, there are many thoughtful people who, judging Jesus from the Gospel account we have of His life, are far from regarding Him as sinless, as witness the following passages from Winwood Reade's " Martyrdom of Man " (pp. 223-227) :—

> " If we regard Jesus only in His relations with those whose brief and bitter lives He purified from evil, and

[1] Farrar's actual words are as follows : " They (Christ's miracles) were, to use the favourite expression of St. John, not merely 'portents' (*τέρατα*), or powers (*δυνάμεις*), or signs (*σημεῖα*), but they were works (*ἔργα*), the ordinary and inevitable works (whenever He chose to exercise them) of One, whose very existence was the highest miracle of all. For our faith is that He was sinless ; and to borrow the words of a German poet, ' One might have thought that the miracle of miracles was to have created the world, such as it is ; yet it is a far greater miracle to have lived a perfectly pure life therein.' The greatest of modern philosophers said that there were two things which overwhelmed his soul with awe and astonishment, ' the starry heavens above, and the moral law within ' ; but to these has been added a third reality no less majestic—the fulfilment of the moral law without us in the person of Jesus Christ. That fulfilment makes us believe that He was indeed Divine ; and, if He were Divine, we have no further astonishment left, when we are taught that He did on earth that which can be done by the Power of God alone." (" Life of Christ," popular edition, p. 80, Cassell & Co.)

illumined with ideal joys, we might believe Him to have been the perfect type of a meek and suffering Saint. But His character had two sides, and we must look at both. Such is the imperfection of human nature, that extreme love is counterbalanced by extreme hate: every virtue has its attendant vice, which is excited by the same stimulants, which is nourished by the same food. Martyrs and persecutors resemble one another, their minds are composed of the same materials. The man who will suffer death for his religious faith will endeavour to enforce it even unto death. In fact, if Christianity were true, religious persecution would become a pious and religious duty; if God designs to punish men for their opinions, it would be an act of mercy to mankind to extinguish such opinions. By burning the bodies of those who diffuse them, many souls would be saved that otherwise would be lost, and so there would be an economy of torment in the long run. It is therefore not surprising that enthusiasts should be intolerant. Jesus was not able to display the spirit of a persecutor in His deeds, but He displayed it in His words. Believing that it was in His power to condemn His fellow creatures to eternal torture, He did so condemn by anticipation all the rich and almost all the learned men among the Jews. It was His belief that God reigned in Heaven, but that Satan reigned on earth. In a few years God would invade and subdue the earth. It was therefore His prayer, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." . . . Not only the inoffensive rich were doomed by Jesus to hell fire, but also all those who did anything to merit the esteem of their fellow-men. Even those that were happy and enjoyed life—unless it was in His own company—were lost souls. "Woe unto you that are rich," said he, "for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you when all men shall

speak well of you, for so did their fathers of the false prophets." He also pronounced eternal punishment on all those who refused to join Him. "He that believeth and is baptized," said He, "shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned." . . .

In Jerusalem the scribe had succeeded to the seer. The Jews had already a proverb: A scholar is greater than a prophet. The supernatural gift was regarded with suspicion, and, if successful with the vulgar, excited envy and indignation. In the East at the present day there is a permanent hostility between the mollah, or doctor of the law, and the dervish, or illiterate "man of God." Jesus was, in point of fact, a dervish; and the learned Pharisees were not inclined to admit the authority of one who spoke a rustic patois and misplaced the "h," and who was no doubt, like other prophets, uncouth in his appearance and uncleanly in his garb. At Jerusalem Jesus completely failed; and this failure appears to have stung Him into bitter abuse of His successful rivals, the missionary Pharisees, and into the wildest extravagance of speech. He called the learned doctors a generation of vipers, whited sepulchres and serpents; He declared that they should not escape the damnation of hell. Because they had made the washing of hands before dinner a religious ablution, Jesus, with equal bigotry, would not wash His hands at all, though people eat with the hand in the East, and dip their hands in the same dish. He told His disciples that if a man called another a fool, he would be in danger of hell fire; and whoever spoke against the Holy Ghost, it would not be forgiven him "neither in this world nor in the world to come." He said that if a man had done anything wrong with his hand or his eye, it were better for him to cut off his guilty hand, or to pluck out his guilty eye, rather than to go with his whole body into hell. He cursed a fig tree because it bore no fruit, although it was not the season of fruit, an action as rational as that of Xerxes, who flogged

the sea. He retorted to those who accused Him of breaking the Sabbath that He was above the Sabbath.

It is evident that a Man who talked in such a manner, who believed that it was in His power to abrogate the law of the land, to forgive sins, to bestow eternal happiness upon His friends, and to send all those who differed from Him to everlasting flames, would lay Himself open to a charge of blasphemy; and it is also evident that the generation of vipers would not hesitate to take advantage of the circumstance. But whatever share personal enmity might have had in the charges that were made against Him, He was lawfully condemned according to Bible law. He declared in open court that they would see Him descending in the clouds at the right hand of the power of God. The high priest tore his robes in horror; false prophecy and blasphemy had been uttered to His face."

Thirdly, without taking such a pronounced view of Jesus' character as is contained in the above quotation, it must be admitted that the Gospel account of His life is at best fragmentary, and that, regarded as evidence of such an important fact as sinlessness, it is inadequate.[1]

[1] The fragmentary character of the Gospel narrative has recently been pointed out most clearly in a book entitled "The Gospel History and its Transmission," by F. C. Burkitt, Norrisian Professor of Divinity in Cambridge University. In a passage discussing why the raising of Lazarus is not mentioned by St. Mark, Professor Burkitt says (p. 222): "If the events occurred as told in the fourth Gospel, if they were as public as the fourth evangelist insists, so fraught with influence upon the action both of friends and foes, they could not have been unknown to a well informed personage like Mark, nor could he have had any reason for suppressing a narrative at once so public and so edifying. It is true that Mark does not record the Lord's Prayer, or many of the most noteworthy sayings of Jesus, but these were not public events like the raising of Lazarus. Is it possible that any one who reads the continuous and detailed story of Mark from the Transfiguration to the entry into Jerusalem can interpolate into it the tale of Lazarus and the notable sensation which we are assured that it produced? Must not the answer be that 'Mark' is silent about the raising of Lazarus because he did not know

For some action which we might regard as selfish or sinful could easily have occurred without its being mentioned in the Gospels. *Fourthly*, taking such a limited account as the Gospels contain as evidence of the sinlessness of Jesus' life, I undertake to prove from the accounts we have of various saints that they too were sinless. For instance, I fail to find a single action that can be considered as definitely sinful in the life of the Curé of Ars, as recorded by his biographer. Likewise the life of Gautama, as told in the Buddhist Books, is in many respects comparable to the Christian story, and especially in the account which is given of the Virgin Birth and sinlessness of the Buddha.

Having now considered the evidence for the alleged sinlessness of Jesus and for the other miraculous events connected with His life, and shown how inadequate it is from the point of view of a scientific standard of truth, I proceed to consider if it is possible on general grounds, or on those of probability, to be other than agnostic in one's attitude towards the supernatural divinity of Jesus Christ. In doing this, it is impossible to separate the divinity of Christ from certain other dogmatic teachings which are practically common to all the various Christian Churches and sects, namely:—

I. The divine revelation of the Ten Commandments and the Levitical Laws to the Jews on Mount Sinai through the agency of Moses.

II. The divine mission of the Jewish nation in Palestine and the world, the Jewish "Jehovah" and the Christian "God the Father" being one and the same person.

III. The coming of a Messiah who should save the world, and be of David's race.

IV. That Jesus was this Messiah, and that He set about saving the world by founding a Church.

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of it? And if he did not know of it, can we believe that, as a matter of fact, it ever occurred?"

For those interested in this subject and the raising of Lazarus in particular, there is an interesting discussion of this question between Professor Burkitt and Professor Gwatkin in the *Contemporary Review* for April, June, and July, 1908, vol. xciii.

V. That He gave to the Bishops or Heads of this Church the power of transmitting the Holy Ghost, a kind of supernatural energy, which could be received from outside by a willing humble heart prepared to receive it.

VI. That Bishops at the present day are still endowed with this power.

VII. That Christ's Church is not merely an earthly institution, limited by death; but that, through a resurrection, past and present believers in Christ are united into one Church and that there will be a Day of rewards and punishments for all human beings, a Day on which Christ will sit as Judge.

VIII. That, in virtue of His Divinity, Christ's teaching is of the nature of a Divine Revelation and therefore has an Absolute Value.

These dogmas, which I think will be admitted by every orthodox Christian, are the only corollaries of the Divinity of Jesus Christ which I mean to discuss, and which are undoubtedly so bound up with orthodox teaching about His Divinity that they must all fall or stand together. I might have included many other points of dogmatic Church-teaching, but these are sufficient; and I carefully have excluded any points which have given rise to theological controversy among the various Churches, as for instance, who are the true successors of St. Peter, and whether St. Peter was given the power of infallibility, etc.

Now, the easiest way to estimate the probability as to whether Jesus was supernaturally divine or no, is to arrange in parallel columns the difficulties that arise on the one hand from disbelief, and on the other hand from belief in this view. Thus if Jesus was not divine, the mind is at once struck with the following difficulties :—

1. The fact that so many generations of intelligent men have been able to hold this belief.
2. The fact that this belief has played such a part in the lives of so many heroes and saints, and has been the mainspring and source of energy of so much of the world's best work.
3. The fact that the Christian Church, by missionary effort and otherwise, has spread as it has done, and has played, as its enthusiastic supporters say, such a civilising part in history, indicating the operation of divine guidance.

4. The fact that science does not seem to explain the origin of evil and the laws of morality; and that the struggle between right and wrong are at first sight readily explained by the Christian belief that God and Satan, the Powers of Good and Evil, are ever ready to influence man's will, and that Christ by His self-sacrificing death was able to make an atonement for man's sins, and thereby to establish a superior claim to the attachment of man's heart.
5. The fact that inequalities are so glaring in this life that one cannot help longing that there should be some compensation hereafter for suffering and pain patiently borne on earth.
6. The fact that so many human beings have the feeling of immortality, and that Christ's Resurrection seems almost a necessity as a fulfilment of these feelings.
7. Various difficulties connected with the internal evidence, contained in the New Testament, for Christ's Divinity viz. :—
   (*a*) Christ was an impostor in claiming to be the Son of God, if not Divine.
   (*b*) How explain Peter's boldness and change of attitude before and after Christ's death, if no Resurrection?
   (*c*) Corroboration of the Resurrection by the testimony of St. Paul, whose life is to many evidence of Divine guidance.

On the other hand, if we admit the divinity of Jesus Christ and the main corollaries connected therewith, we are faced with a multitude of difficulties which may be classified as follows :—

(A) *Biblical and Historical Difficulties.*

1. The fact that the Levitical laws were certainly borrowed from the Babylonian code which existed in the time of Hammurabi, who reigned about the year 2150 B.C. (*vide* "The Oldest Laws of the World," by Chilperic Edwards, p. 56).

2. The fact that there can now be no doubt of the mixed origin of the Jewish scriptures, and that much of the Pentateuch is a jumble of legends, derived from many sources, some of which are certainly historically untrue.[1]

[1] Wellhausen's books, "Prolegomena to the History of Israel," "The Composition of the Hexateuch and of the Historical Books

3. The fact that Jehovah of the Old Testament is represented as vindictive, bloodthirsty, jealous and permitting, if not approving of, polygamy, although he shows many merciful traits in His relations to Israel, and enjoins justice, mercy and humility to the Jews among themselves; that is, He has many of the characteristics of an Oriental despot of the time.

4. The fact that the passages in Isaiah specially supposed to refer to Christ are now recognised as spurious and having no Messianic significance, and modern critics are clear that the prophets had no idea other than that of a judge or political leader in speaking of a Messiah.[1]

Further, Christ's connection with the line of David is not nearly as clear as is generally supposed, for it is Joseph's genealogy which is given in the Gospels, whereas we are told nothing about Mary's parentage; and yet, if the Incarnation were a fact, Joseph's genealogy would not affect the question.

5. The fact that the spread of the Christian Church was largely due—from an historical point of view—to its adoption by a Roman Emperor for political reasons, an emperor who murdered his wife and son, and that for many centuries the Christian Church was a political quite as much as a spiritual agency in spite of Christ's definite instructions to His disciples to avoid politics.

6. The fact that history does not bear out the civilising claims of the Christian Church. Taking English history alone, never was the country more oppressed by war, and the poor harassed by force, than under its two most mild and priest-ridden kings, Edward the Confessor and Henry VI.[2]

7. The fact that, in the Middle Ages, Christian armies

of the Old Testament," and Robertson Smith's books, "The Old Testament in the Jewish Church," "Lectures on the Religion of the Semites," are some of the most important works on the subject.

[1] *See* "The Book of Isaiah," by George Adam Smith, D.D., and "Introduction to The Book of Isaiah," by E. K. Cheyne, D.D.

[2] *See* "An Introductory History of England," by C. R. L. Fletcher, London, John Murray, 1904.

blessed by popes and bishops went into foreign countries to make converts at the point of the sword, not differing, except perhaps in degree, from the proselytising methods of Mohammedans.[1]

8. The fact that the history of civilisation is full of instances illustrating how the Christian Church has continually tried to retard progress and knowledge, and been on the side of reaction and oppression. Thus Galileo spent some of the best years of his life in prison for proving that the earth went round the sun, while the Inquisition in Spain killed off numbers of people who showed any sign of heterodox originality. And in the present day it is still much the same; for in the Dreyfus Case the Catholic Church in France was on the side of reaction and far more anxious that he should be convicted than that the truth should be discovered: while the recent judicial murder of Signor Ferrer in Spain was undoubtedly inspired by the ecclesiastical party.

9. The fact that improvements in the social condition of mankind have often been due to the scientific study of disease and social conditions along lines opposed by orthodoxy.[2]

[1] The Crusades, as well as the conquests of Mexico and Peru, were enterprises in which many heathen prisoners were given the choice of death or conversion to the Christian faith. Those really anxious to learn the rationalist point of view in regard to the spread of Christianity would do well to read a book like Philip Vivian's "The Churches and Modern Thought," where in the seventh chapter the subject is clearly treated.

[2] The Roman Catholic Church affords the most striking examples of the malevolent influence of a reactionary orthodoxy, such as the backward state of education in Catholic countries, the spread of disease through the use of Holy Water in churches, the state of the roads and other public works in papal states, the encouragement given to beggars and the traffic in relics, etc.; but even here, in England, we have the educational needs of the country sacrificed to religious controversy, and for years the passing of a bill for legalising marriage with a deceased wife's sister was delayed by the Church party. Other reforms like cremation, the rational treatment of lunatics and criminals, the abolition of slavery, etc., have all had to struggle against ecclesiastical bias in the past.

(B) *Difficulties arising from a knowledge of Natural Science.*

1. The fact that the study of astronomy, geology, chemistry, physics, and the various biological sciences, all goes to prove that the biblical account of the Fall of Man and of the Flood, etc., is nothing more than a legend or orally transmitted effort of primitive man to explain his origin and relation to the universe, before he knew the facts of natural science, and further that the earth is at least 100,000,000 years old, and has been evolved from condensation of a portion of the matter forming our solar system. There are in brief all the difficulties which arise from the fact that—in Sir Oliver Lodge's words—"Orthodox modern science shows a self-contained and self-sufficient universe, not in touch with anything beyond or above itself—the general trend and outline of it known—nothing supernatural or miraculous; no intervention of beings other than ourselves being conceived possible."[1]

2. The fact that it is universally maintained by biologists, that man and apes have been evolved from a common ancestor, and that evolution applies to all forms of life; and further, that there has been no sudden break in the continuity of the evolution of man from ancestors of simpler form corresponding to the sudden acquisition of a soul.

3. The fact that there is no question that in nature—among plants and animals—what is commonly called cruelty is rampant and apparently ordained by the Christian God and Creator. This cruelty takes the form either (*a*) of a struggle for existence among individuals, or (*b*) of a struggle for existence between various communities of individuals, who have clubbed together for mutual protection.

(C) *Difficulties associated with the study of Physiology, Psychology and Medicine.*

1. The fact that all physiological evidence goes to

[1] This quotation does not, of course, represent Sir Oliver Lodge's own position.

prove that mind is a function of brain-matter, just as movement is a function of the cardiac muscle fibre, and that there is no evidence for soul or will being independent of matter. Will is apparently the resultant of all the forces acting on the nervous system at any one time, even though it appears to man himself as if he could be independent and act as a free agent. If the brain is destroyed by an injury or tumour, the mind, including the will, proportionately suffers; and at death or under an anæsthetic, which acts on the cells primarily of the cerebral cortex, the mind is in abeyance.

2. The fact that experts on mental conditions are clear that moral or so-called spiritual states are inseparably bound up with physical states. Thus heavenly visions can be produced by fasting in a suitable subject. Again; while, on the one hand in "General Paralysis of the Insane," there is commonly a condition of exaltation or happiness, on the other hand in so-called neurasthenia, —a condition often affecting most earnest Christ-like natures, worried by religious problems and intellectual difficulties—there is usually depression or acute mental suffering that sometimes ends in suicide.

In short, there is no evidence of a divine spirit enabling the will to control the body.

3. The psychological fact that what a man believes is real to him. Hence all religions are equally real, except in so far as they depend on evidence which reasoning, based on observations with the senses, rejects. Thus in religious mania Roman Catholics never have the delusion that they have committed the unpardonable sin, because they believe the pope is infallible and can forgive all sin. Hence the delusions of insanity and neurasthenia with homicidal and suicidal tendencies are not the promptings of the devil, but are the result of conditions associated with the teachings of childhood.

4. The fact that it is impossible to draw a theoretical line between sanity and insanity, which means, that there is no such thing, theoretically, as moral responsibility. Practically, we have a kind of standard of responsibility

in order to protect society against any one whose actions show a tendency to be anti-social. As long as a man's views do not influence his actions in a way to make him socially impossible, he may hold the maddest views imaginable without being put in an asylum.

5. The fact that crime and insanity are recognised by alienists as different aspects of mental disease, and often are the result of wrong teaching or of an absence of teaching in childhood. Therefore sin and ignorance are interdependent.

6. The fact that it is difficult to find one psychologist —that is a man who has made a study of the facts of mind—whose writings support orthodox ideas about the supernatural. Psychologists are nearly all unanimous in recognising as unknowable what pure metaphysicians and theologians reckon to be *a priori* or necessary truths. Now, from a rational point of view, the function of theology (*i.e.*, the study of the relative value of different conceptions of God and the truth of different theological systems) would appear only to begin when psychology (*i.e.*, the study of mind in all its aspects of consciousness and experience) had pronounced in favour of a supernatural or divine factor as necessary to explain certain mental phenomena.

(D) *Theological and Ethical Difficulties.*

1. The fact that so many bishops, filled with the gift of the Holy Ghost, have been, to put it mildly, such poor examples of Christlike men, as witness the state of the Catholic Church before and at the time of Luther.

2. The fact that Christ's Church, though under divine guidance, has done so much harm in the world as well as good; for example, one might quote the acts of the Inquisition, the burning of heretics, the wars waged in the name of religion, the political murders and other acts of violence committed by the papacy from time to time.[1]

[1] The evil done by Christian Churches is forcibly expressed by Huxley in the following words: "I verily believe that the great good which has been effected in the world by Christianity

3. The fact that the various Christian sects, though actuated by the Christian ideal of loving their neighbours, often do all they can to damage their rivals, and that members of various Christian Churches, forgetting Christ's words, "He who is not against us is for us," often use the most uncharitable language about agnostics and others, who do not belong to their Church.[1]

4. The fact that, taking Christ's own standard of a tree being known by its fruits, the fruits of the Christians in Europe of the present day are so poor that, when the Japanese Government in 1871 sent a commission to Europe to study the Christian Churches with a view to possibly adopting the Christian religion as a State religion in Japan, the commissioners reported that the results were so unsatisfactory that Japan would gain nothing by giving up her ancestor worship and Buddhism.[2]

has been largely counteracted by the pestilent doctrine on which all the Churches have insisted, that honest disbelief in their more or less astonishing creeds is a moral offence, indeed, a sin of the deepest dye, deserving and involving the same future retribution as murder and robbery. If we could only see in one view the torrents of hypocrisy and cruelty, the lies, the slaughter, the violations of every obligation of humanity, which have flowed from this source along the course of the history of the Christian nations, our worst imaginations of hell would pale beside the vision." ("Essays," vol. v., pp. 240, 241.)

[1] An excellent example of ecclesiastical exclusiveness occurred only this year (May, 1911). The Bishop of Hereford, having invited certain Nonconformists to a special celebration of the Holy Communion in his cathedral on June 28th to commemorate the Coronation, was severely criticised in Convocation by the Bishop of Winchester, Dr. Talbot, who received the support of the Archbishop of Canterbury and others. (*See The Times*, May 5th and 6th.)

[2] "The Japanese Government sent a body of more than seventy scholars, priests and politicians to Europe and the United States in 1871 to make an inquiry into the moral effect of Christianity, and to advise the Government as to adopting it. No official report is to be had, but—Christianity was left severely alone. Professor Hearn, one of the best informed authorities, says that the report was that Christianity 'had proved itself less efficacious as an ethical influence in the West than Buddhism had done in the East.'" ("Literary Guide," No. 175, p. 15, January, 1911.)

5. The fact that without the Holy Ghost conferred and received at Confirmation, many agnostics are distinctly Christ-like men, temperate, charitable and deeply religious. Consequently, it would not be unreasonable to ask whether agnosticism may not make for morality, as Huxley thought, when he wrote :—" Until human life is longer and the duties of the present press less heavily, I do not think that wise men will occupy themselves with Jovian or Martian natural history; and they will probably agree to a verdict of 'not proven' in respect of naturalistic theology, taking refuge in that agnostic confession which appears to me to be the only position for people who object to say that they know what they are quite aware they do not know. As to the interests of morality, I am disposed to think that if mankind could be got to act up to this last principle in every relation of life, a reformation would be effected such as the world has not yet seen: an approximation to the millennium, such as no supernaturalistic religion has ever yet succeeded, or seems likely ever to succeed, in effecting." ("Essays," vol. v., p. 40.)

6. The fact that morality is bound up with the intellect, and that there is no crime which has not been committed in the name of conscience with the best of intentions. Thus, a man's conscience varies with his intellectual upbringing, and there is no evidence that people were less moral before Christ's time than since, but only that their code of morality was different and less extensive than ours —in fact, in quite recent times a savage race like the Maoris were stricter observers of their code of morality, such as it was, than any European nation of the Christian moral code. All that is best in Christ's moral teaching can be found in Confucius, or Buddha, or Socrates, or other Greek philosopher.[1]

[1] Professor Ernst Haeckel puts this point very clearly where he writes: "Among the numerous and varied forms of religion, which, in the course of the past ten thousand years and more, have been evolved from the crudest prehistoric beginnings, the foremost rank undoubtedly belongs to those two forms which still

7. The fact that Mohammedanism has spread since the time of Christ and embraces more converts than Christianity, would suggest on Christian lines of reasoning divine guidance. There is the same difficulty about all theological systems which make converts. Apologists for Church Christianity, like Westcott, first isolate Christianity from all other religious phenomena of the world and then argue upon its details. In fact, "Christian witness and Biblical literature is treated by apologists as they would treat no other witness and no other literature in the world. And they cannot show cause enough, for their reasons depend on the very witness under dispute. And so they go on arguing in a circle *ad infinitum.*" [1] The modern scientifically trained mind seeks for a common explanation of all theological systems.

8. The fact that the conception of Christ as God-man is unthinkable. The Church does not get over the difficulty by saying, "This is a mystery, which man's mind cannot understand," and theologians cannot help falling into the difficulty of writing about Jesus Christ as a man at one time and as God at another, according as it

continue to be the most widely accepted among civilised races—the older Buddhism and the younger Christianity. The two have very many features in common, alike in their mythology and in their ethics: indeed, a considerable part of Christianity has come directly from Indian Buddhism, just as another part is drawn from the Mosaic and Platonic systems. But, looked at from the point of view of our present stage of culture, the ethic of Christianity appears to us much more perfect and pure than that of any other religion. We must, it is true, hasten to add that it is exactly the weightiest and noblest principles of Christian ethic—brotherly love, fidelity to duty, love of truth, obedience to law—that are by no means peculiar to the Christian faith as such, but are of much older origin. Comparative psychology proves that these ethical principles were more or less recognised and practised by much older civilised races thousands of years before Christ." ("The Confession of Faith of a Man of Science," translated by J. Gilchrist, p. 62, Watts & Co., 1910.)

[1] "Robert Elsmere," Bk. IV., ch. 27, by Mrs. Humphry Ward.

suits their argument. In fact "God is not wisely trusted when declared unintelligible." [1]

9. The fact that belief in another life and in rewards and punishments at the Day of Judgment—on the authority of the revelation ascribed to Christ—is usually associated with a most subtle and subconscious form of selfishness, namely "other-worldliness" or a desire to save the soul. This trait is often strongly developed in saints, as any one will find who reads "The Life of St. Francis of Assisi," St. Augustine's "Confessions," or the "Life of the Curé of Ars." This is a curiously contradictory trait in a Christian, as Christianity is supposed to stand for unselfishness, in spite of the hymn by Bishop Christopher Wordsworth, which contains the lines:—

> "Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee,
> Repaid a thousand-fold will be;
> Then gladly will we give to Thee,
> Who givest all."

In this list of difficulties—which I have summarised in the annexed table for the sake of making comparison easier—I have probably omitted many which theologians, on the one hand, and scientific philosophers, on the other, would insist upon. But I think I have included the most important and sufficient to enable the thoughtful reader to make up his mind on the probability of the question as to whether Jesus Christ was supernaturally divine or no. Every one must decide for himself, as the weight of probability does not depend on the number of difficulties which can be stated on one side or the other, but rather on the insolubility of any one difficulty. Personally, I have no doubt about giving up a belief in Jesus Christ's divinity, as the difficulties raised by such a position can be satisfactorily explained to my mind, while many of the difficulties raised by a belief in His divinity are quite inexplicable on any rational line of argument. In fact, I may say that, by looking at all religious pheno-

[1] "The Witness of God," p. 22; a lay sermon by T. H. Green (Longmans, Green & Co., 1883).

Table summarising some difficulties raised on the one hand by accepting, and on the other by rejecting the belief in the supernatural divinity of Jesus Christ and the dogmatic teaching associated therewith by all the Christian Churches.

Difficulties of rejecting this belief.	Difficulties of accepting this belief.
1. Belief held by generations of intelligent men.	(A) *Biblical and Historical Difficulties.* 1. Levitical Laws certainly taken from Babylonian Code. 2. Pentateuch a mixture of legends. 3. Jehovah represented in the Old Testament as having the characteristics of an Oriental despot. 4. Messianic passages in Isaiah of doubtful significance. 5. The Christian Church, founded by Constantine, a political quite as much as a spiritual agency. 6. The Christian Church not always a civilising agency. 7. Converts made by Christian Church at point of the sword. 8. Christian Church continually retarding progress and persecuting those in pursuit of truth. 9. Progress in social conditions has often been opposed by Christian Authority.
2. So many heroes and saints enabled to do their work through this belief.	
3. Spread of the Christian Church and its work in the world a proof of divine guidance.	
4. Belief explains the origin of evil and the necessity of an atonement for sin.	(B) *Natural Science Difficulties.* 1. Science shows a self-contained and self-sufficient universe. 2. Law of evolution applies to man as well as to other forms of life, and does not support the acquisition of a supernatural soul by man. 3. Struggle for existence in Nature incompatible with the Christian view of the Creator.
5. A future life and a Day of Judgment an appropriate explanation of the inequalities of life on earth.	
6. Christ's Resurrection almost a necessary phenomenon in association with human feeling of immortality.	(C) *Physiological, Psychological, and Medical Difficulties.* 1. Mind or spirit a function of brain matter. 2. Spiritual states inseparably bound up with physical states. 3. Beliefs and delusions have the same origin and are equally real subjectively. 4. Impossibility of drawing a sharp line between sanity and insanity; and so an absolute moral responsibility is difficult to maintain. 5. Crime and insanity different aspects of mental disease. 6. Psychology does not demand a supernatural factor to explain mental phenomena.
7. Difficulties from the internal evidence of the New Testament :—	(D) *Theological and Ethical Difficulties.* 1. Gift of Holy Ghost not always associated with Christian qualities. 2. Evil done by Christian Churches. 3. Rivalry and absence of charity between Churches and sects. 4. Christianity rejected by Japanese Government owing to its failure in Europe. 5. Many agnostics, though unconfirmed, are Christ-like men. 6. Morality dependent on the intellect. There is nothing absolute about the Christian moral code. 7. All religious phenomena must be judged by the same standard as Christianity, and, if divine guidance is seen in the spread of one, it must also be seen in the spread of any other. 8. The conception of Christ as "God-man" is unthinkable. 9. Belief in Immortality and the Day of Judgment is a very common cause of selfishness, even in saints.
(*a*) Christ obviously not an impostor, and yet He claimed to be divine.	
(*b*) St. Paul's testimony corroborating the Resurrection.	
(*c*) How explain Peter's change of character after Christ's death, if no Resurrection ?	

mena from a scientific point of view, and believing in the evolution of man from lower forms of life, I have no difficulties whatever to worry me. I can explain all the facts of life to the satisfaction of my reason. In saying this, I do not mean to imply that I understand the nature of life and of matter, the creation of the universe and man's place in the universe, the origin of evil and the fate of man's personality after death, etc. These are problems, the solution of which we cannot at present attempt through lack of knowledge, and therefore they do not worry the mind. They are indeed problems of a very different nature from those dealing with ascertained facts, and to be dogmatic about them is mere foolishness. As G. H. Lewes says:—"Psychology has to check this groping amid shadows by showing that the coast-line of the Knowable is sharply defined from the ocean of the Unknowable by the necessary limitations of human faculties"[1]. The position of being guided by reason, rather than by faith or feeling, in one's relationship to the visible and knowable world, is in no way inconsistent with an attitude of humility about the Unknown. In fact, humility as well as relative certainty is the dominant note of a truly scientific man, whose ideal is the love and pursuit of truth.[2]

[1] *Prolegomena*, § 74. The same truth was also stated most clearly by Kant, when he wrote: "The greatest and perhaps the sole use of all philosophy of pure reason is, after all, merely negative, since it serves not as an organon for the enlargement of knowledge, but as a discipline for its delimitation; and, instead of discovering truth, has only the modest merit of preventing error." ("Kritik der reinen Vernunft," p. 256; Ed. Hartenstein.)

[2] Huxley's attitude is well expressed in the following passage: "The extent of the region of the uncertain, the number of the problems, the investigation of which ends in a verdict of not proven, will vary according to the knowledge and the intellectual habits of the individual agnostic. I do not very much care to speak of anything as 'unknowable.' What I am sure about is that there are many topics about which I know nothing, and which, so far as I can see, are out of reach of my faculties. But whether these things are knowable by any one else is exactly one of those

matters which is beyond my knowledge, though I may have a tolerably strong opinion as to the probabilities of the case. Relatively to myself, I am quite sure that the region of uncertainty—the nebulous country in which words play the part of realities—is far more extensive than I could wish. Materialism and Idealism, Theism and Atheism, the doctrine of the soul and its mortality and immortality, appear in the history of philosophy like the shades of Scandinavian heroes, eternally slaying one another and eternally coming to life again in a metaphysical 'Nifelheim.' It is getting on for twenty-five centuries at least since mankind began seriously to give their minds to these topics. Generation after generation philosophy has been doomed to roll the stone up hill; just as all the world swore it was at the top, down it has rolled to the bottom again. All this is written in innumerable books; and he who will toil through them, will discover that the stone is just where it was when the work began. Hume saw this, Kant saw it; since their time more and more eyes have been cleansed of the films which prevented them from seeing it; until now the weight and number of those who refuse to be the prey of verbal mystifications has begun to tell in practical life." ("Essays," vol. v., "Agnosticism and Christianity.")



MIRACLES—CONTINUED

"If there is anything in the world which I do firmly believe in, it is the universal validity of the laws of causation, but that universality cannot be proved by any amount of experience, let alone that which comes to us through the senses." (Huxley "Essays," ix., p. 121.)

CHAPTER VII

MIRACLES—CONTINUED

IN this chapter I propose to complete my remarks about the divinity of Christ by shortly discussing the difficulties raised by rejecting that belief.

1. *How is it that so many generations of intelligent men have been able to hold this belief?*

It is indeed a striking fact that many minds eminent in a variety of ways have found no difficulty in holding this belief, and have derived the greatest joy and inspiration therefrom; nevertheless, it is easily explained by two other facts which must always be remembered. Firstly, that this belief was taught them in childhood, and that it was associated in their minds with all that they held dearest and holiest, before they had grown up and their reasoning powers were fully developed, with the result that they never afterwards were capable of a really unbiassed consideration of the subject, or made a strenuous attempt to get at the facts.[1] Secondly, that this belief has never been associated with that type of

[1] A typical illustration of this is the case of a young man or boy, who, inspired by the earnest words of some preacher, thinks that he has a vocation for the Church. At an early age he undergoes a special course of theological training, designed to shield him from scepticism and from studying the facts of life for himself. He takes Orders, marries, and has children. Later in life, when he has the chance of learning something of the world, what probability is there that he will bring an unbiassed mind to the consideration of any new facts which may meet his view, dependent as he is for his bread and butter and the support of his family on his orthodoxy and the approval of his professional superiors?

great mind characterised by a special knowledge of psychology, the study of which alone enables a man to obtain the facts of mental life and form a really reliable opinion. It is no uncommon thing in mental practice to see a man with fine reasoning powers talk quite irrationally or like a child on some subject about which he has delusions or a grievance, that is, in which he takes an emotional and biassed interest; while on some other subject of merely intellectual interest to him, having no bearing on his grievance and therefore a subject which does not stir his emotions, he can talk most acutely and rationally.

Further, the effect of bias produced in childhood is not peculiar to orthodox Christians. It is a phenomenon seen all over the world, among Mohammedans, Chinese, Japanese, Hindus, etc. For instance, among Buddhists, many of whom have extreme intellectual acuteness, belief in the transmigration of the soul, as if it were a proposition which could be proved, is almost universal.[1]

But it may be said: "How is it that Christian beliefs have been held by wise and intelligent men practically from the time of Christ?" The answer to this is that the early Christians were essentially not philosophers; nor, with rare exceptions, were they particularly acute thinkers, being drawn, as we read in the New Testament, principally from the labouring classes, who were brought up in all the common or superstitious beliefs prevalent at that day, viz., beliefs in miracles, witchcraft, possession by "evil spirits,"[2] etc. Consequently, if a belief

[1] The word "soul" is used here for the Hindu word *Karma*, which really means, in the words of Professor Rhys David, "the seed of existence or sum of merit and demerit, which often comes to much the same thing as sin or error. To destroy 'Karma' is the only way to attain Nirvana or Annihilation and obtain deliverance from existence on this earth." *Vide* article "Buddhism" ("Encyclopædia Britannica," Ed. IX., vol. iv., p. 433.)

[2] The life of St. Francis illustrates such beliefs almost typically. Thus Paul Sabatier writes:—"We have come to one of the most delicate features of the life of St. Francis—his relation with diabolical powers. Customs and ideas have so profoundly changed

once sprang up, it would be handed on without much critical enquiry. Further, in the history of thought, we see how, among primitive people, theology dominates philosophy and still more science, and how it is only in the past two centuries that science, by establishing the inductive method of reasoning and the necessity of verification by experiment, has been able to shake off the thraldom of theology.[1] And it is almost only within the last century that the facts of mind have been *scientifically* studied, because these facts are less easy to collect and be certain of than those of physics, chemistry or other branch of natural science. Thus, a thinker like St. Paul was trained from childhood to be a theologian, and, in consequence, he took for granted a great deal that a thoughtful man of to-day would never admit without more evidence. I shall have more to say hereafter in this chapter about St. Paul's bias, when I come to discuss the value of his witness to Christ's Resurrection.

2. *How is it that this belief has played such a part in the lives of so many heroes and saints, and has been the*

in all that concerns the existence of the devil and his relations with men, that it is almost impossible to picture to oneself the enormous place which the thought of demons occupied at that time in the minds of men.

The best minds of the Middle Ages believed without doubt in the existence of the perverse spirit, in his perpetual transformations in the endeavour to tempt men and cause them to fall into snares. Even in the sixteenth century, Luther, who undermined so many beliefs, had no more doubt of the personal existence of Satan than of sorcery, conjurations, or possessions." (*Loc. cit.*, p. 189.)

[1] G. H. Lewes defines Theology, Science, and Philosophy as follows: "Theology restricts itself to the region of Faith and leaves to Philosophy and Science the region of Inquiry. Its main province is the province of Feeling, its office is the systematisation of our religious conceptions." (*Prolegomena*, § 2.)

"The office of Science is the systematisation of our knowledge of the order of phenomena considered as phenomena." (*Prolegomena*, § 3.)

"The office of Philosophy is the systematisation of the conceptions furnished by Theology and Science. . . . Philosophy furnishes a doctrine which contains an explanation of the world and human destiny." (*Prolegomena*, § 4.)

mainspring and source of energy of so much of the world's best work?

This difficulty is answered in much the same way as the last, as it deals with phenomena not peculiar to the Christian belief. Mohammed promised his followers all the joys of Paradise if they died in the true faith, with the result that ardent Mohammedans have joyfully died in battle and positively thrown themselves in the way of death, as exemplified in our own times by the Dervish followers of the Mahdi. In fact, it is very rash to base an argument in favour of any religious system on the readiness with which its proselytes die, because various people's attitude towards death is so different. Thus, in China, a criminal for a comparatively small sum of money can get a substitute to undergo willingly even the extreme penalty of death.[1]

There are not many professing Christians, perhaps, who go through life feeling at nearly all times the presence of an invisible Jesus Christ by their side; but, given such a feeling combined with love, an heroic unselfish life is just what one would expect as the result of trying to live up to an ideal life always present to the mind's eye. A good example of such a life is that of the Quaker, Stephen Grellet, or that of Mr. Prince Lee, schoolmaster of the late Archbishop Benson, who is our authority for the statement that Christ was present to him as a personal friend.[2]

[1] Huxley expressed himself on this subject as follows: "No man who has studied history, or even attended to the occurrences of every-day life, can doubt the enormous practical value of trust and faith; but as little will he be inclined to deny that this practical value has not the least relation to the reality of the objects of that trust and faith. In examples of patient constancy of faith and of unswerving trust, the 'Acta Martyrum' do not excel the annals of Babism." (Essay on "Agnosticism," vol. v., p. 214.)

An account of the Babi sect and of the Martyrs of Ispahan, who were most cruelly put to death about the year 1881, is given by Mr. E. G. Browne in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, article 6.

[2] "Memoirs of the Life and Gospel Labours of Stephen Grellet," edited by Benjamin Seebohm. (London, A.W. Bennett, 1861.)

Archbishop Benson, in a memorial sermon on his schoolmaster,

Further, to consider the question fairly, we must take into account not only the noble heroic lives inspired by a love of Christ's unselfish character, but also the haughty, cruel acts of Churchmen inspired by the belief that they were the spiritual heirs of the divine power given by Christ to His Apostles, and also the irrational—not to say mad—acts of various prophets and saints who believed that by torturing the body they were following Christ's divine example of fasting, etc., and were acting in a way pleasing to God and likely to promote the welfare of their immortal souls.[1]

Adherents of any religious system are apt, in fact, to accentuate the sane and ideal acts, and minimise or be silent about the mad acts of their special hero. Thus, Quakers are ready enough to insist that George Fox's preaching about the "Inner Light" or voice of conscience was due to divine inspiration, but are as silent as they can be about his behaviour at Lichfield, where he ran about the market-place, more or less naked, and crying: "Woe to the bloody city of Lichfield!"[2]

Prince Lee, said: "This one thing is the first and last they (his schoolboys) learned of him, that the personal friendship of Jesus Christ our Lord was that gift which God was incarnate to bestow on every man who sought it." ("Life of Edward White Benson," by A. C. Benson, vol. i., p. 41, Macmillan & Co., 1899.)

[1] An excellent example of such madness occurs in Paul Sabatier's "Life of St. Francis of Assisi," where he refers to the recent discovery of the account by an eye-witness of the last preachings and tragic death of the friars who went to Spain and Morocco, as follows:—"Never was the mania for martyrdom better characterised than in these long pages, where we see the friars forcing the Mahometans to pursue them and make them win the heavenly palm. The forbearance which Miramolin as well as his fellow-religionists at first show gives an idea of the civilisation and the good qualities of these infidels, all the higher that very different sentiments would be natural in the vanquished ones of the plains of Tolosa.

"It is impossible to call by the name of sermons the collections of rude apostrophes which the missionaries addressed to those whom they wished to convert; at this paroxysm the thirst for martyrdom becomes the madness of suicide" (*loc. cit.*, p. 225).

[2] Professor William James, in his "Varieties of Religious

3. *How is it that the Christian Church has spread as it has done by missionary effort and otherwise, and has played such a civilising part in history, proving, as its enthusiastic supporters say, that it has been under Divine guidance?*

This difficulty can be answered in a few words, as a similar argument might be used in support of any religious system which has flourished at different times. Thus, in the present day, though Mohammedanism started centuries after the time of Christ, more people are said to read the Koran than the Bible. [1]

The definition of the word "civilising" is not as easy as most people think. But nearly every one is agreed that nothing puts civilisation back so much as war. Taking, then, war as the test of civilisation, can we say that war has been less frequent among the Christian nations of Europe than in Confucian China during the past 2,000 years, where even at the present day a love of peace, respect for parents, and some other virtues are perhaps more strongly marked than in Christian England, even if our claim is just that in our attitude to marriage our morals are superior?

4. *The fact that science does not seem to explain the origin of evil and the laws of morality—whereas the struggle between right and wrong are at first sight readily explained by the Christian belief that God and Satan, the powers of*

Experience," p. 7, quotes this incident from the "Journal of George Fox," to prove that he "was a psychopath or détraqué of the deepest dye."

[1] Professor Nöldeke, in his article on the Koran, writes: "The Koran is the foundation of Islam. It is the sacred book of more than 100,000,000 of men, some of them nations of immemorial civilisation, by all of whom it is regarded as the immediate word of God. And since the use of the Koran in public worship, in schools and otherwise is much more extensive than, for example, the reading of the Bible in most Christian countries, it has been truly described as the most widely read book in existence. This circumstance alone is sufficient to give it an urgent claim to our attention, whether it suit our taste and fall in with our religious and philosophical views or not." ("Encyclopædia Britannica," Ed. IX., vol. xvi., p. 597.)

good and evil, are ever ready to influence man's will; and that Christ, by His self-sacrificing death, was able to make an atonement for man's sins, and thereby to establish a superior claim to the attachment of man's heart—is a difficulty to many a Christian which requires an answer.

The origin of evil and the existence of pain and suffering in the world, whether it be mental suffering, including feelings of remorse for sin, or only physical suffering, are certainly mysteries which perhaps may never be fully explained. But science does point out that, on the whole, joy must exceed suffering, or else there would be universal self-destruction and that there is not nearly as much suffering as is often supposed. The mere animal joy of living is potentially present in every one, and the worry of sin is only strong in those who have artificially developed that tendency of the mind. This tendency is probably present in nearly all men, and in some animals, namely, to feel uncomfortable and guilty when an action has been done contrary to the teaching or training in which the man or animal has been brought up. Our conscience is said to "prick" us when we have this feeling. Now, the conscience has certainly an intellectual basis. For, if we have been taught that something is wrong, then our conscience will work in accordance with that teaching or belief, even if it leads to actions abhorrent to other people in a more enlightened state of culture. This fact is well illustrated by the case—related in Mariner's "Tonga"—of a young girl, who on the death of her husband, a chief from Fiji, felt it her duty to be strangled. The account of this case is given as follows (vol. i., p. 273):

> "Among Finow's followers a certain chief, a native of Fiji, fell ill and died; his wife, also a native of Fiji, in accordance with the religious notions in which she had been brought up, considered it a breach of duty to outlive him; she therefore desired to be strangled. All her Tonga friends endeavoured to dissuade her from what appeared to them so unnecessary and useless an act; but she was determined, she said, to

> fulfil her duty, failing which she should never be happy in her mind; the hotooas of Fiji would punish her, and thus by living she should only incur fresh miseries. Her friends, finding all remonstrances in vain, allowed her to do as she pleased. She accordingly laid herself down on the ground by the side of her deceased husband, with her face upwards, and desiring a couple of Fiji men to perform their duty, they put a band of gnatoo round her neck, and, pulling at each end, soon accomplished her wishes."

Numerous other instances could be quoted proving that what appears most horribly immoral to some people is felt by others to be positively praiseworthy. For instance, among the Maoris, who held the belief that a dead man's heroic qualities could be acquired by eating his flesh, there was no feeling but one of pride at killing and eating an enemy—the braver the better. Similarly, religious feeling of the most intense kind has often led priests to sacrifice victims to their gods, as exemplified for instance, by the sacrifices of the Aztecs, so vividly described in Prescott's "Conquest of Mexico." Thus, the laws of morality are not nearly so simple a matter as they appear to the orthodox Christian who attaches an absolute value to the Christian code of morals and believes the history of the Garden of Eden and of the Fall to be true. On the other hand, science does explain how conscience in two different people can lead one to regard the same action as a duty, which the other regards as devilish; and, by showing the need for intellectual enlightenment before accepting conscience as a guide, is doing a real service to morality.

The next point to note is that the personality and position of Satan in the Christian belief is far from being as clear as I have stated it in the "difficulty" heading this section.[1] For Christianity is evolved from the

[1] In the Middle Ages the conception of the devil's position in the kosmos was much clearer than it is at the present day among orthodox Christians. For example, here is Paul Sabatier's

religion of Moses, which was essentially a pure monotheism, whereas the amphitheism which believes in God and devil alike is more characteristic of some other religions. Professor Ernst Haeckel makes some remarks on this subject in his book entitled, "The Confession of Faith of a Man of Science," which are worth quoting :—(p. 71) "Let it be noted, however, in passing, that the amphitheism which believes in God and devil alike is much more compatible with a rational explanation of the world than pure monotheism. The purest form of this is perhaps the amphitheism of the Zend religion of Persia, which Zoroaster (or Zarathustra, the "Golden Star") founded 2,000 years before Christ. Here Ormuzd, the god of light and goodness, stands everywhere in conflict with Ahriman, the god of darkness and evil. The continual conflict between a good and evil principle was personified in a similar manner in the mythology of many other amphitheistic religions ; in the older Egyptian, the god Osiris was at war with the evil Typhon ; in the old Indian, Vishnu the sustainer with Siva the destroyer, and so forth.

"If we really must retain the conception of a personal God as the key to our view of the universe, then this amphitheism can explain the sorrows and defects of this world very simply as being the work of the evil principle or devil. Pure monotheism, on the contrary, as represented in the religions of Moses and Mohammed in their original form, has no rational explanations of these to offer. If

description of the conceptions held by St. Francis :—"The devil is the prince of the demons, as God is the prince of the angels ; capable of all transformations, they carry on to the end of time terrible battles which will end in the victory of God ; but meantime each man his whole life long is contended for by these two adversaries, and the noblest souls are naturally the most disputed.

"This is how St. Francis, with all men of his time, explained the disquietudes, terrors, anguish, with which his heart was at times assailed, as well as the hopes, consolations, joys in which in general his soul was bathed. Wherever we follow his steps, local tradition has preserved the memory of rude assaults of the tempter which he had to undergo." (*Loc. cit.*, p. 190.)

their "one God" is really the absolutely good, perfect being they proclaim, then the world which He has created must also be perfect. An organic world so imperfect and full of sorrows as exists on this earth He could not possibly have contrived. . . ." And again (p. 75):—"In view of these considerations it is hard to understand how the large majority of the so-called educated classes can persevere on the one hand in declaring belief in a personal God to be an indispensable principle of religion, and on the other hand in at the same time rejecting the belief in a personal devil as an exploded superstition of the Middle Ages."

This tendency to give up belief in a personal devil has been most interestingly illustrated by a recent case in Stockholm, in which an ecclesiastical tribunal upheld the orthodoxy of a Swedish clergyman against whom a charge of heresy was brought for preaching the non-existence of a personal devil.[1]

In conclusion to the above remarks, I maintain that theological language about the "Atonement" is more or less unintelligible to the common-sense man, who in the past has accepted it on faith as a mystery which must not be inquired into, though his reason has failed to perceive how the death or sacrifice of one man could lessen the moral responsibility of other men. It is true that the necessity of an atonement is a comparatively old idea, but it comes down to us from Jewish times, when Jehovah was regarded as a kind of Oriental potentate, vindictive and jealous, who had to be placated with sacrifices, just as the tendency of all primitive people is first of all to

[1] An account of the action against Pastor Hannerz and how it arose, together with the views of the principal actors in the case and of certain bishops, professors and literary men on the question of a personal Devil and Hell, was edited by Anton Karlgren in a little book entitled "Djäfvulsstriden, Våren, 1909, en serie uttalanden om djäfvulen och helvetet" (Albert Bonniers Förlag, Stockholm). Many of the articles first appeared in the *Dagens Nyheter*, a newspaper which instituted an inquiry on this subject. An account in English entitled "The Passing of the Devil in Sweden," will be found in the "Literary Guide" for January, 1910.

regard their various gods as beings whose good-will can be bought by sacrifices. Thus, in the very word atonement is implied the idea that man by his deliberate choice is a rebel to Jehovah, as in the legend of the Garden of Eden, and that the wrath of Jehovah must be appeased by a sacrifice.

5. *How is it that one cannot help longing, in view of the glaring inequalities of this life, that there should be some compensation hereafter for suffering and pain patiently borne on earth?*

This difficulty is satisfactorily answered to my mind by pointing out that inequalities are not peculiar to human beings. Other animals suffer from disease, injuries due to accident, inherited weakness, etc.; and the result is that in the long run only those mentally and physically adapted to their environment are able permanently to propagate themselves. In fact, in this struggle for existence the operation of natural laws is on the whole beneficent. For it results in there being less suffering on the earth than would be the case if weak individuals were artificially kept alive and enabled to propagate a weak race.

Nevertheless, in the case of man, whose mental faculties are so much more important than his physical in the struggle for existence, and whose consciousness of suffering is proportionately so much more acute, one feels that there is something unfair about inequality of opportunity. But there is no reason for supposing that man is not subjected to the same law of the survival of those best adapted mentally, (and physically), to their environment; and the mere feeling of longing that this law should not apply to man or should be counterbalanced by other conditions in a life after death is no reason for believing that these feelings are an indication of the truth.[1]

On the subject of making the best of life's conditions without future expectations, Huxley's words as usual are very stimulating. He writes: "Nature, so far as we have been able to attain to any insight into her ways, recks little about consolation, and makes for righteousness by very round-about paths. And, at any rate,

6. *How is it that so many human beings have the feeling of immortality, and that Christ's Resurrection seems almost a necessity as a fulfilment of these feelings?*

This difficulty, like the last, is based on feeling, which is very different to reasoned proof or probability. And, as a matter of fact, a feeling of immortality has been by no means as common in the history of mankind as is usually assumed. From the Scriptures it is clear that the Jews, about the time of King David, had no belief in a Resurrection, as is shown by many of the Psalms; and a silence about life after death is also characteristic of the book of Job. Then in the time of Christ the Sadducees formed a special party who did not hold this belief. Nirvana, promised by Buddha to all those who had perfectly conquered desire, was not a life hereafter, but merely extinction, or the bliss of no longer having to live again on this earth a life of sin and suffering. Among savage races a belief in immortality is by no means universal. With the Tongans, for instance, only the chiefs were supposed to survive.[1]

Thus we see that it is a belief either associated with

whatever may be possible for other people, it is becoming less and less possible for the man who puts his faith in scientific methods of ascertaining truth, and is accustomed to have that faith justified by daily experience, to be consciously false to his principle in any matter. But the number of such men, driven into the use of scientific methods of inquiry and taught to trust them by their education, their daily professional and business needs, is increasing, and will continue to increase. The phraseology of Supernaturalism may remain on men's lips, but in practice they are naturalists. . . . In these, as in all other practical affairs, we act on the aphorism, "Laborare est orare"; we admit that intelligent work is the only acceptable worship, and that whether there be a Supernature or not, our business is with Nature" ("Essays," vol. v., p. 37).

[1] *See* Mariner's "Tonga," vol. i., p. 339: "He (Finow, the king) believed in the doctrine of a future state, agreeably to the notions entertained by his countrymen, namely, that chiefs and matabooles having souls exist hereafter in Bolotoo, according to their rank in this world; but that the common people, having no souls, or those only that die with their bodies, are without any hope of a future existence."

earthly greatness, or characteristic of man becoming more conscious of his mental powers, and of his superiority over other animals, while at the same time his intellect is not sufficiently developed for the realisation of the relative importance of the earth and the universe. It is essentially a feeling associated with human pride, and bound up with the belief that the earth is the centre of the universe, and that such an important being as man must necessarily be immortal. When man's intellectual powers get more developed, and he learns the facts of nature, he becomes humbler—what is more conducive to a feeling of humility than realisation of the infinitude of space?—and we see the phenomenon in our day of a lessening of this feeling in proportion to knowledge.[1] Instead of dogmatically asserting that man is immortal, and giving a more or less detailed description of hell, purgatory and paradise, the scientific philosopher only indulges in the hope of immortality, and in this hope he humbly includes all life. He does not limit the possibility of immortality to himself.

Historically, the Church's teaching about Christ's Resurrection gave a more definite form to the belief than possibly can be found in any other religion. But the type of belief is not peculiar to Christianity. It is found in other systems. Thus at the present day the ancestor worship of the Japanese and Chinese is based on the feeling that ancestors do not lose their conscious personality at death, but are invisibly present and interested in the deeds of their descendants. Much of the Japanese spirit of self-sacrifice and bravery is due to this feeling, which, judging from the fruits it brings forth, will bear comparison with the Christian belief.[2]

[1] H. G. Wells may be taken as typically representing the man with a modern all-round education, and in his book entitled "First and Last Things" he repudiates entirely the feeling of personal immortality.

[2] A book of essays on Japanese life, entitled "Kokoro," by Lafcadio Hearn (London, Gay & Bird), is full of noble pictures of bravery and self-control; and, in particular, essays called, "The Genius of Japanese Civilisation," "From a Travelling

7. Christ was obviously not an impostor; and yet, in claiming to be the Son of God, how can He escape this charge if He was not divine?

The above is the natural question of an earnest Christian of the fanatical type, when confronted with the view that Jesus was only human. But the statement that Jesus Christ was an impostor can only be made by a misuse of the word impostor. For even assuming that Jesus regarded Himself as the Son of God—in all but two or three places He calls Himself the Son of Man—there is no reason for thinking that He was practising a conscious deception. Brought up from youth to believe in the coming of a Messiah—His ardent mind meditating on the destinies of the Jewish race and mankind—and longing to do something for His fellow-creatures, He genuinely came to believe that He was the Messiah; and so, if He did deceive others, He deceived Himself as much. And this kind of subconscious deception is not properly called imposture. It would be as fair to call Jeanne d'Arc an impostor for giving divine visitations as a reason for her crusade, although afterwards at her trial under the pressure of mental torture and worry she renounced her claims to divine guidance. And in our own day we have the interesting case of Mrs. Besant, who, at three phases of her life, has been respectively a member of the Church of England (and the wife of a clergyman), an atheist and a Buddhistic theosophist. In each phase she has published writings supporting her belief, which leave no room for doubt that she is perfectly genuine; so that to call Mrs. Besant an impostor in her present phase, because she has been a professed atheist, would be a gross misuse of the word. Her history only shows how easily the mind deceives itself, if it takes an emotional attitude towards truth instead of relying on reasoned evidence. On the other hand, Madame Blavatsky, the foundress of the Theosophical Society, may truly be called an impostor, as

Diary," "A Conservative," "Some Thoughts about Ancestor-Worship," beautifully portray the attitude of the Japanese towards their ancestors.

the evidence is conclusive that she resorted to deliberate trickery to create the belief that she could communicate by more or less supernatural means with beings in Tibet called Mahatmas.[1]

The lives of saints at all periods of the world's history are full of curious examples of self-deception. In the next chapter I shall have something more to say about this in considering the subject of religious experiences.

Also, even if Jesus called Himself the Son of God, there is much to be said for the view that He called Himself Son of God much in the same way as He regarded all human beings as children of God—perhaps in His own case in a special degree. What is certain, is that the title He laid most stress on was " Son of Man." And no one who has righteousness and love and self-control as an ideal will dispute His right to this title, least of all an agnostic scientific philosopher.

8. *How explain Peter's boldness and change of attitude before and after Christ's death, if no Resurrection occurred ?*

There is no doubt that a crisis occurred in the life of St. Peter at the time of Christ's crucifixion ; and that, from having been on occasions rather a timid follower of Christ, he became one of the chief supports of the young Christian Church. But is it necessary to admit a miracle like the Resurrection to explain this ? It is clear that Peter had an impulsive character easily excited and depressed, as is evidenced in the account of Christ's miraculous walking on the Sea of Galilee, where Peter is represented as impulsively asking to be given the same power and as rapidly depressed when he found himself sinking. On another occasion it is Peter who says to the other disciples : " Let us go and die with Him." And similarly, it was Peter who boasted he would never desert Christ whatever others might do. This is just the type of character possessed by enthusiasts who do things in the world. They feel strongly and are exceptionally influenced by enthusiasm or remorse. Given a strong enough motive, their energy will carry them over every difficulty,

[1] *See* Note on p. 88 of Chapter III.

and Christ obviously recognised this about Peter, when He said—if we have His words reported correctly—: "Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build My church." Now, to my mind we have quite a strong enough motive to account for the boldness of Peter after Christ's death in the remorse which he must have felt so acutely at having disowned Christ, accentuated very possibly by his having been aware of Christ's sorrowing eyes resting on him in the very act of denial—assuming that the Gospel account of the life of Jesus has historical value.

9. *How can the testimony of St. Paul to the fact of the Resurrection be set aside and the wonderful results and experiences of his life be explained except by divine guidance?*

There is no reason to doubt that the account we have of St. Paul's journey to Damascus is substantially true; and that he heard a voice as described in the Acts, saying: —"I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." But there can be no question that St. Paul had an enthusiastic type of character as well as St. Peter, and that, brought up as an orthodox ardent Jew, intent on persecuting Christian heretics, he had been very much worried by their patient and forgiving demeanour. In fact, here was a religious problem which he had been worrying over for some time and trying to solve, but without success, viz., how to harmonise the meek and self-sacrificing life of Jesus and His followers with the teaching of orthodox Pharisees, who held that Christianity was the work of the devil. And, just like religious worries in the present day, which in mental practice are by no means an uncommon cause of neurasthenia, it produced almost a typical neurasthenic attack. For the voice which St. Paul alone heard and his subsequent temporary blindness are symptoms characteristic of certain types of neurasthenia. His blindness was obviously of the functional type, and may be compared to well-recognised though rare cases in the present day. Thus, among the Lourdes miracles, restoration of sight to the blind through faith is by no

means unknown, and I myself have seen at a London hospital a case of blindness cured by faith in the doctor's remedies, as there was nothing structurally the matter with the patient's eyes. St. Paul's experience, in short, can easily be paralleled by cases not a hundred years old. Thus, Podmore gives an account of just this type of revelation which is worth quoting :—

> " The prophet—in this case a working mechanic—writing in November, 1847, gives an account of a spiritual experience which had befallen him in September, 1836, when he was eighteen years of age. He earnestly desired to become a preacher, and had gone to his pastor for instruction. The pastor had in the course of conversation asked him how he would prove, apart from the Bible, the existence of God. The question rankled ; he took it home and pondered over it ; it kept him awake at night and held him from attending properly to his work. Then, after a day or two, on the 16th of September, 1836, the solution came :—
>
> " ' I went to my dinner with a troubled mind. My brain felt hot. I ate but sparingly. After dinner I strolled into the pasture back of the house, walking with my hat in my hand. The cool breeze fanned my brow. I wandered until the bell reminded me that it was one o'clock. I returned towards the shop. While on my way, I stopped and sat down. I then and there began to doubt the existence of God, then the existence of matter, then of myself, of my power and ability to move, and at the same time attempted to move my hand and could not, and immediately mother appeared to me.'
>
> " His mother (dead some time previously), then proceeded to instruct him on the nature of God, the world, man's soul, and other spiritual mysteries. At the end she said :—' Now you have become convinced there is a God, you need no longer doubt your own existence. Move your fingers a little, and then

you can get up. Remember what I have told you. Go in peace.' When he returned to the shop it was almost night." ("Modern Spiritualism," vol. i., p. 174.)

So much for St. Paul's personal witness to the Resurrection, an experience which undoubtedly impressed him so much that it formed the guiding star of his subsequent life, as he himself clearly indicates on the one or two occasions when he tells the experience. He also mentions other witnesses to the Resurrection, including an appearance to 500 that is not mentioned in the Gospels, which shows that in that credulous age—assuming that Jesus' Resurrection has no reality in fact—the account of a miraculous Resurrection got its origin soon after Jesus' death, just as the miraculous early found its way into the account of Buddha's life.

Lastly, does St. Paul's life afford evidence of divine guidance? Let us consider the facts. Acute as was his intellect in a theological argument, yet many of his acts were irrational. For instance, he crossed over to Macedonia in response to a dream, in which he saw a native of Macedonia beckoning him. He may of course have had other and better reasons for this journey; but, if not, his behaviour is almost similar to that of the Chinese Christian minister and leader named Hsi, already mentioned, who ploughed his land during the summer of 1894 because of a vision, although the month of September was recognised by immemorial custom as best for the purpose;[1] and it is interesting to learn that, owing to an

[1] *See* "Pastor Hsi, one of China's Christians," by Mrs. Howard Taylor, pp. 340-342.

St. Francis of Assisi may also be quoted as excellently illustrating the tendency to find divine guidance in irrational acts: "One day they were travelling together, when they arrived at the intersection of the roads to Sienna, Arezzo, and Florence. 'Which shall we take?' asked Masseo. 'Whichever one God wills.' 'But how shall we know which one God wills?' 'You shall see. Go and stand at the crossing of the roads, turn round and round as the children do, and do not stop until I bid you.' Brother Masseo began to turn; seized with a vertigo, he was

exceptionally rainy summer, Hsi did better than all his neighbours who waited for the proper month for ploughing. But success in a single exceptional case like this does not prove divine guidance. If farmers habitually farmed on the principle of being guided by dreams rather than by experience, many would soon end in the bankruptcy court or a lunatic asylum. Similarly, the success of St. Paul's missions does not prove a divine guidance. It only is a proof of the energy of his character, and of the genuineness of his belief in his divine mission and of the impression which the experience on the road to Damascus had made on him.

Much more might be said about difficulties raised by acceptance or rejection of belief in the divinity of Christ.[1] But in what I have read of theology and philosophy, I have not personally come across any difficulty, involved in deleting the miraculous from the story of His life, which cannot be satisfactorily answered to my mind. At the same time, I want to make it quite clear that in rejecting the claims made on Jesus' behalf to divinity in the supernatural sense, I do not attack His right to be regarded as divine in a natural sense. As a genius whose teaching shows an intuition in the moral sphere which has never been surpassed, and as a leader who put into practice what He preached, He will command the love

nearly falling, but caught himself up at once. Finally Francis called out, 'Stop! which way are you facing?' 'Towards Sienna.' 'Very well; God wills that we go to Sienna.' (Fior. 11; Conform. 50b. 2., Spec. 104a.) Such a method of making up one's mind is doubtless not for the daily needs of life, but Francis employed still others like it, if not in form at least in fact." ("Life of St. Francis of Assisi," by Paul Sabatier pp. 140, 141. English translation, Hodder & Stoughton, 1908.)

[1] In short, the whole question may be summed up by asking which is more probable, that our account of the Resurrection and other miracles rests on untrustworthy evidence, because of the human tendency to fallibility both in observing and recording phenomena, or that occurrences took place contrary to human experience of the present day, that is, of a time when the need for accurate observation and verification of all phenomena has been realised?

and reverence of mankind through all ages, and His example, like that of all strong men, will be helpful for all time to His weaker brethren. In the words of Renan,[1] "Drapeau de nos contradictions, tu seras le signe autour duquel se livrera la plus ardente bataille," we may recognise Jesus Christ as our ideal man. But it must always be remembered that His knowledge of the world and the scope of His surroundings were distinctly limited, so that, if a literal acceptance of His words (as reported in the New Testament), leads in practice to a man under present-day conditions doing something which his reason condemns, there can be nothing disloyal in a Christian being guided by his own reason rather than slavishly obeying the words of the Bible, as if they were divinely and literally inspired.

Of course, rejection of belief in the miraculous is antagonistic to all the dogmatic teaching and supernatural claims on which the various Churches as Churches essentially rely for their authoritative position. Therefore it is not surprising if any one, brought up from childhood to reverence a particular Church, finds it difficult or painful to admit the idea that the teaching, received from parents and respected elders or priests, can be based on fallible evidence. Still less is it surprising if the clergy themselves resent what they call "free-thinking," and if they are unable to see how insufficient is the evidence on which the claims of their Church rest. Ordained when young and inexperienced, and taught to believe that they are endowed at ordination with supernatural powers beyond those possessed by the laity, they are attracted by what they regard as a vocation, forgetting that it is also a profession. Later in life, when perhaps they have married and have children, and depend for promotion on the approval of their ecclesiastical superiors, it is not surprising if they are disinclined or unable to consider these questions with unbiassed minds, even if the years have brought some knowledge of the facts of life.[2]

[1] "Vie de Jésu," p. 247, Paris, Calmann Lévy, popular edition.

[2] The faithfulness of Catholic clergy to the dogmas of the

Similarly, human nature being what it is, we need not be surprised to find, in studying the history of any religion, that the unconscious policy of priestcraft has always been to exalt all that increases the importance of the priestly office and that tends to excite, by insisting on the importance of ritual and ceremony, a reverence for religious mystery. For example, the simple altruistic teaching of Buddha was buried in a few centuries beneath the priestly ritual developed by Buddhist monks and priests, and today in Tibet, where prayer has been reduced to a matter of flags and wheels, no one would be more astonished and grieved than he himself to find into what his teaching has developed.[1]

Church of Rome proves that, apart from the ties of matrimony, early training provides sufficient bias to prevent the clerical mind from absorbing modern scientific thought; and if there is any movement in the direction of modern scientific criticism, the fate of Father Tyrrell and of the Abbé Loisy proves how much courage adherence to "modernism" requires.

To what temptations a clergyman may yield under the stress of a starving wife and family, was recently illustrated by a pathetic case reported in the *Daily Mail*, September 1st, 1909, as follows :—

"The Rev. Douglas Philip, R.N., of Brentwood, Essex, was committed for trial at Saffron Walden yesterday, charged with breaking and entering the parish church of Clavering, and stealing the contents of the alms-box, amounting to about 6s., on August 18th, and with breaking open the alms-boxes at Wicken and Wenden churches, between August 18th and 21st, and stealing from them sums amounting to about 10s. and 8s. respectively. The last charge was additional to that of the previous hearing.

"In answer to the charges, the prisoner said: 'It is with sincerest regret and shame that, owing to a temporary aberration of mind and kleptomania, brought on by financial worry in having to support my wife and family, and lack of business as a commission agent in selling books, I admit the felony with which I am charged. I feel my position most keenly. It has ruined my life and prospects.'"

[1] "In Tibet especially the development in doctrine was followed by a development in ecclesiastical government, which runs so remarkably parallel with the development of the Romish hierarchy as to awaken an interest which could scarcely otherwise be found in the senseless and fatal corruptions which have overwhelmed the ancient Buddhist beliefs. . . . Lamaism,

I frankly rejoice in any lessening of priestly power, based on supernatural claims, because in my reading of history this has been the cause of all the evil of religion ;[1] and when one considers all the intolerant acts done by various Churches in the name of conscience (if not of Christ), of which the acts of the "Inquisition" are a conspicuous example,[2] it is not surprising that some

with its shaven priests, its bells and rosaries, its images and Holy Water, its popes and bishops, its abbots and monks of many grades, its processions and feast days, its confessional and purgatory, and its worship of the double Virgin, so strongly resembles Romanism that the first Catholic missionaries thought it must be an imitation by the devil of the religion of Christ; and that the resemblance is not in externals only, is shown by the present state of Tibet, the oppression of all thought, the idleness and corruption of the monks, the despotism of the government, and the poverty and beggary of the people." From the article on "Buddhism," by Professor Rhys David, "Encyclopædia Britannica," Ed. IX., vol. iv., p. 438.

[1] I personally try to avoid the word religion as much as possible, since it has been so much misused, and is too sacred a word, to my mind, to be used in theological controversies. As Professor Seeley pointed out in "Natural Religion," the professing atheist is sometimes a most earnestly religious man, while the consecrated priest may be a practical atheist. Consequently, I think that religious system is a better expression than religion in any argument, as all earnest men, in search of the truth, are united in respecting and loving the religious spirit wherever it shows itself. In fact, religion in the truest and widest sense of the word can do no harm.

[2] The same spirit which prompted the acts of the Inquisition is by no means peculiar to the Roman Catholic Church. As recently as 1880-1887, the Rev. Shirley Baker, for years the Wesleyan missionary in Tonga, indulged in inquisitorial methods on a small scale. Having disagreed with the Wesleyan Convention at Sydney and been replaced by another missionary, he induced King George of Tonga to found a National Church of Tonga and to make him prime minister. Then commenced a far from edifying competition between the Wesleyans and the new Church. While Mr. Baker deported to a desert island a number of his former Tongan converts to Wesleyan beliefs, who preferred to be made martyrs rather than join the new National Church, the new Wesleyan missionary tried to bring pressure to bear on King George by telling him that his favourite

people hold that more harm than good has been done by the so-called Christian religion. And to-day I believe the same intolerant spirit exists subtly and subconsciously in any Church system.[1] As evidence of this, I repeatedly find, when I discuss the meaning of the word "Christian" with clergymen and Catholic priests and ministers of other denominations—often personal friends and men for whom I have the greatest liking—that they object to my defining a Christian as one who tries to lead a life like Christ and carry out the spirit of His teaching. Of course they admit that this is very desirable; but at the same time they insist that a Christian is rather one who

grandchild would die if he did not reinstate the Wesleyans, as God had sent this illness through anger with his actions. Finally, when some of the exasperated Wesleyan party tried to take Mr. Baker's life by firing at him, and he was beginning to retaliate, the British Commissioner in Fiji thought it was time to interfere; and so he swooped down on Tonga and deported Mr. Baker to Auckland.

A full account of all these proceedings is given in a book entitled "Brown Men and Women," by Edward Reeves (London, Swan Sonnenschein & Co.); and another book, called "The Diversions of a Prime Minister," by Basil Thompson (who was the secretary of the British Commissioner in Fiji, and was left behind to get the finances of Tonga out of the disorder into which they had fallen under the Rev. Shirley Baker), gives an official, if shorter, sketch of the same incidents, as well as a most amusing account of the opening of the first Tongan parliament, and of the habits of the Tongans, among whom a zeal for Church services and parade produced numerous undesirable, though amusing, religious phenomena.

[1] That it is still present in the Roman Catholic Church, is at any rate certain, as proved by its recent treatment of Father Tyrrell. No comment of mine is necessary when Robert Dell, a member of that communion, was impelled to write as he did to *The Times*. His letter is given in Appendix N.

For an account—by no means biassed against the clergy—of the intolerance of ecclesiasticism in the Church of England of the XIX. Century, see "A History of the English Church in the Nineteenth Century" (by F. W. Cornish; Macmillan, 1910), vol. ii., chaps. xi. and xii. where the bitter animosities aroused by the publication of "Essays and Reviews," and by the "Colenso Case," are described.

holds certain views about Christ's nature and agrees with certain dogmatic articles of belief.

If the reader has followed me thus far, he may be ready to accept the agnostic attitude about the supernatural, were it not that in the present day personal experience is frequently quoted as a reason for faith in a miraculous Christianity. Therefore, in the next chapter, I shall examine the value of personal experience as evidence, and at the same time consider arguments based on the supposed properties of the soul. These two questions are conveniently taken together, because the persons who believe most firmly in the existence of the soul and of its being in communion with the divine spirit, are exactly those who are apt to quote their own personal experience as a reason for their faith.

THE SOUL

"Experience is co-extensive with the whole of consciousness, including all of which the mind is conscious as agent or patient, all that it does from within as well as all that it suffers from without. . . . In this sense the laws of thought, as well as the phenomena of matter—in fact, all knowledge whatever—may be said to be derived from experience." (Mansell, *Prolegomena Logica*, § 93.)

CHAPTER VIII

The Soul

"Soul" is a word expressing a conception which it is very difficult to define. In fact, it is a word which is apt to be used so loosely that I remember how difficult I found it in my school-days to have any clear idea what kind of entity it was meant to connote. For I read of body, soul and spirit as well as of mind or intellect, as if they were all different faculties of human beings; and again, I heard "heart" often used—as for instance, "his heart was touched"—without it being made clear whether this word was used as an alternative for soul or spirit. And then, again, in a sentence like, "he has a tender conscience," the word "conscience" is often used as if it were an alternative expression for spirit.

Consequently, I believe nearly every one grows up very vague as to what meaning should be attached to the word "soul." And if we ask our "pastors and masters" what is the soul, and how we know of its existence, we are told, firstly, that it is quite different from mind, as it is not subject to the laws which govern matter and is that part of man's nature which is immortal; and secondly, that there is no question about its existence, because a belief therein is of the nature of a necessary truth which transcends experience and is universally believed.

This, I hope, will be admitted by the reader to be a fair statement of the orthodox Christian's views about the soul. Let us now examine what truth there is in them.

First of all, I must draw attention to the fact that Herbert Spencer, G. H. Lewes, and other psychologists, have shown that every proposition, if demonstrably true, is a "necessary truth"; and also that all universal truths are based on experience. Consequently, admitting that the existence of the soul is a universal truth, we must admit that it is based on experience, just as it should also be capable of verification if it is a necessary truth. Secondly, I must ask, "Is a belief in the existence of the human soul universal?" I cannot see how an honest reader can give other than a negative answer to this question, if he is aware of the various views which mankind has held or holds about the soul. Of such views the following two examples will suffice to prove this point.

(*a*) My first example is taken from Buddhism, which only recognises Nirvana, that is extinction, as the reward of self-conquest and the destruction of "Karma." In the words of Professor Rhys David: "Buddhism does not attempt to solve the problem of the ultimate origin of the Cosmos . . . The heavens and hells of Buddhism are part of the material world, subject like the rest of it to the law of cause and effect, and the beings within them are still liable to rebirth, decay and death. . . . It must be understood that while Buddhism occasionally yielded so far to popular phraseology as to make use of the word 'soul,' it denies altogether that the word is anything more than a convenient expression, or that it has any counterpart in fact. Birth is not rebirth, but new birth. Transmigration of soul becomes a transfer of Karma . . . Buddhism does not acknowledge the existence of a soul as a thing distinct from the parts and powers of man, which are dissolved at death; and the Nirvana of Buddhism is simply extinction." [1]

(*b*) My second example is taken from the belief of a more savage and ignorant people, the Tongans.

An educated youth named Mariner was captured, when about fifteen years old, by the Tongans in the year 1806 (most of the other men on board the ship being killed)

[1] "Encyclopædia Britannica," Ed. IX., vol. iv., p. 432.

and became the favourite attendant of the most important man among the Tongans, a chief named Finow. Mariner was quick at picking up their language and had a retentive memory, so that in the four years that he lived there he acquired a mass of the most valuable information, especially as he had every opportunity from his association with Finow and other chiefs of observing and dicussing Tongan rites and beliefs. In fact, "Mariner's Tonga" is quite a classic in its way, and is recognised as a trustworthy and accurate account of the Tongans of a hundred years ago. Consequently the following record of Tongan belief about the soul is noteworthy :—

> "Afterwards, when Mr. Mariner understood the language, he asked the king how he could be so cruel as to kill the poor man for so trifling a fault. His majesty replied that he was only a low vulgar fellow (a cook), and that neither his life nor death was of any consequence to society. (Note: The lower orders are thought to have no souls, and a cook is considered the most vulgar profession among them.)" (Vol. i., p. 68)

And again :—

> "He (Finow the king) believed in the doctrine of a future state agreeably to the notions entertained by his countrymen, namely, that chiefs and matabooles having souls exist hereafter in Bolotoo according to their rank in this world; but that the common people having no souls, or those only that die with their bodies, are without any hope of a future existence." (Vol. i., p. 339.)

Thus we see that belief in the existence of the human soul is neither universal nor is it a necessary truth, as it obviously is not capable of verification. At the same time the word soul certainly connotes a fairly definite conception, even though it is difficult to define. Let us see what it is. The belief of the Tongans about the soul

is very instructive. They had arrived at the stage of being able to conceive of an important chief or priest existing after death, but they were unable to conceive of immortality for the common people. A much loftier conception of course was reached by Christ, who, with the intuition of genius, was capable of teaching that the souls of all men were equally valuable in the eyes of their Heavenly Father. But the teaching of the Christian Churches exhibits a tendency very similar to that of Tongan belief. For, while teaching the existence of the human soul, it denies a soul to animals, and is apt to talk about man as if he were not an animal, or at any rate were raised by his soul to quite a different plane, governed by totally different laws and instincts.

Now there is no hesitation among leading biologists of the present day in asserting that no human faculty can be mentioned which is specifically human and differentiates man in an absolute sense from animals. Since Darwin published his "Origin of Species" and "Descent of Man," it is generally recognised by men believing in evolution that the differences between man and the rest of the animal creation are quantitative rather than qualitative, that is, the common ancestors of men and monkeys potentially possessed the possibility of developing under a suitable environment a brain and nervous system with which are associated those mental functions which we call human. Thus it has been reserved for the present age to formulate the conception that, if man has an immortal soul, all other forms of life have also immortal souls. This may startle the reader at first as something shocking because new to him; but is it not an altruistic and charitable conception, perfectly in harmony with the spirit of Christ's teaching?

At the same time the word "soul" has come to be used so generally as if it were a purely human possession, that it is better perhaps to talk about "immortal spirit" as possessed by all forms of life. In this case, what does soul mean? Obviously, the mental aspect of that development of brain which is characteristic of the human being,

and with which are associated the faculties which are said to be characteristic of man. And in this sense we still can say, " For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his soul ? " Thus, instead of asking a youth, on the threshold of life if he is " converted " and urging him to save his soul, so that at the Day of Judgment it may be all right with him, the earnest man of science urges him to lead a life worthy of an animal possessing a twentieth-century mind, and to avoid or repent with shame any relapse into actions and habits worthy only of primitive savages or animals with comparatively little mind.

By refusing to give a supernatural meaning to the word soul, one does not destroy the symbolism of life, or make even a tendency to mysticism impossible. For, with the formulation of abstract conceptions on the emotional side of consciousness—as well as on the purely intellectual or rational side—and with the mental aspects of life becoming every day more dominant and essential to the subtler kinds of human happiness, every act can be regarded as a symbol of a mental state, and so conducive to happiness only so long as it is done symbolically. Thus sensual indulgence of any kind soon loses its pleasure if done for its own sake. People who live to eat are poor creatures compared to those who eat to live. And nothing is more humiliating to one's pride as a man than to meet other human beings (especially if they are Englishmen) whose sense of humour seldom rises above the level of being amused by anything more elevating than the actions of a drunken man.

If now what I have written has found acceptance with the reader, it will be clear that we are justified in talking about man as possessing a mind and body ; and that soul is only a convenient way of expressing the fact that man's mind has been developed far beyond that of any other animal, and presumably is capable of still further development. Further, there is nothing objectionable in formulating the conception or holding the hope that man possesses an immortal spirit ; but we are not justified

in stating it as a necessary truth. Lastly, if we hold this hope, we must not selfishly restrict its application to ourselves, but must share it with other forms of life, as there is no good reason for drawing any distinction in this respect between man and animals.

Having now cleared the ground by defining the word "soul" in a reasonable and intelligible sense, it will be easier to deal with the subject of "personal religious experience." But first a word or two on the nature of conscience, although I have already made some reference thereto. The tendency of psychology of the present day is to regard consciousness as a whole and to realise the interdependence of its various aspects, insisting on the incorrectness of talking about it as if composed of distinct entities. However, it is often convenient to talk about different aspects of consciousness as if they were distinct, so that in the following pages I hope the reader will bear this caution in mind, whenever I may talk about the will, the intellect, the emotions, etc. And another point, on which psychology insists, is the importance of subconscious processes, with which is associated what is sometimes called "subliminal consciousness" or mind just bordering on the threshold of consciousness.[1] Thus

[1] This expression "subliminal consciousness" has been quite a God-send to a certain class of writers ignorant of psychology, as it has to their mind a suitable sound for a place wherein to locate the soul. Thus, the author of an article entitled "The Plea for Mysticism once more" in the *Hibbert Journal*, vol. iv., p. 417, 1905, wrote: "In the absence of any other satisfactory hypothesis for such ingredients in human nature (lacking which man would simply be a superior animal), it is surely not unreasonable to attribute them to a soul or spirit in man with which the Creator has had first dealings. . . . One naturally asks why is this position becoming more reasonable and less foolish in the eyes of thoughtful people of the present day? Firstly, followers of the transcendental school of psychology will feel that the mystic's position is strengthened by the evidence for the subliminal region of man's consciousness, as stated by Myers; by the laws which govern the subjective as against the objective mind, as emphasised by Hudson, and by the definition of the powers of the subconscious mind by Schofield. Here, in

instinct is a good example of a very subconscious process formed into an almost mechanical habit through inheritance from generations of ancestors who have done some particular act increasingly without conscious effort, though doubtless the first steps in the formation of the habit were attended by more or less conscious effort. Similarly, conscience is almost certainly the subconscious or instinctive summary of all the moral concepts we have formed or have been taught or have inherited, and forms the standard of conduct by which we measure our own actions and maintain our self-respect.[1]

The point, now, which I propose to discuss and analyse, is how it comes about that personal experience is the last argument, and often a convincing one, to certain earnest souls in combating difficulties based on reason. I could illustrate this subject perhaps best from a book like James' "Varieties of Religious Experience," which any reader interested in the subject should make a point of reading; but I think it will be more interesting if I restrict myself to cases within my own experience besides mentioning three cases not quoted by Professor James. I will quote my own case first and run the risk of a small amount of self-revelation being regarded as egotistical.

As a boy of nine, just sent to a fairly big school, I found myself one day in a situation—the details are trivial and need not be mentioned—which I was afraid would get me into difficulties. Brought up to believe in the efficacy of prayer, I prayed about it, and next day received, as I thought, a miraculous answer to my prayer. This success made such an impression on my mind,

this mysterious partner of our being, lie what we call the God-like powers of man; hence has sprung the contribution to religion of all primitive and civilised peoples; hence the power of walking by faith and the conquests of soul over body, etc., etc."

[1] A good example of suicide considered a duty has already been quoted from "Mariner's Tonga," in Chapter VII. Similarly, the custom of "suttee" in India, which existed universally among the Hindus before English influence predominated, made it impossible for a widow to survive her husband with any self-respect.

fortified in subsequent years by numerous further instances of my prayers being answered—it is so easy to forget or minimise the occasions on which prayers are not answered—that, when I eventually read psychology and realised the difficulties raised by reason, I said to myself, "An ounce of practice is worth tons of theory." Then when finally—having had a training in natural science—I had to choose between reason and personal experience, I consciously (or subconsciously) decided to follow experience or feeling rather than reason, and I logically attempted to put my resolve into practice. It was only when I found to what an impossible position it was leading me that I decided to reconsider the whole question devoid of the bias of childhood. And now it is quite clear to me that the explanation of my experience when I was nine years old, and rather a nervous, impressionable child, was clearly coincidence, as it would also appear to any reasonable adult who knew the facts, however much a believer in prayer.

The next instance is that of my father. By way of preface, I must remark that if a census of sudden conversions were taken, it would be found that a very large number occurred about the age of puberty. At that time, when a boy or girl is entering on adolescence and becoming aware of his or her human powers, bodily and mental, the mind is naturally filled with hope and aspirations, and nothing is commoner than to find an outbreak of nervous energy occurring, attended by emotional manifestations which readily take a religious form, such as a feeling of conversion, where the child has been brought up in a suitable religious environment. Now my father, although he was a man of extreme common-sense and hard-headedness, and was probably considered by his contemporaries to be a rather worldly man, told me when he was dying, that as a boy of fourteen he had such a vivid experience of being visited by the Holy Ghost that his faith through life had survived in spite of his reason, although he had never had a similar experience since. Note now, that my father was brought up in a strict and

rather narrow "Quaker" atmosphere and was taught from his earliest days—according to the views of the saintly but unbalanced founder of the "Quakers," George Fox—to be on the look-out for a manifestation of the "inner light" and to expect a visitation from the Holy Ghost.

My next instance is that of a dear friend of mine, who has one of the sweetest and holiest natures I have ever known, but who is not gifted with exceptional acuteness. In discussing difficulties he was once candid enough to say to me: "Even if you could bring scientific proof that Christ's Resurrection was a legend, it would make no difference to me. For I know Christ has risen, as I not only can look back on innumerable instances of Christ's speaking to my soul, but I have daily experience of Christ's indwelling spirit." Now the whole of my friend's life from childhood has been one long training for Christian ministry.

My next instance is that of a revered minister in the Society of Friends, whom I was brought up to admire and love, and whose judgment had great influence with me. He was sincere enough to tell me, in a conversation we had some years ago, that the ultimate reason for his faith was that, when he was a youth and had some kind of acute illness, he was so filled with a sense of a benignant, protecting, all-powerful Spirit, that he could never lose faith in a supernatural personal Father.

These four examples will suffice to show the immense influence which experiences in early life have on the mind, and how they inhibit the reasoning faculties in after years, when any attempt is made to give a rational explanation to the experiences. The particular complexion or form of the experience is derived from the mental atmosphere in which the child is brought up.

There can be no doubt that practically every religious leader has had some such experience.[1] Buddha, for

[1] Some form of nervous affection, which medical knowledge recognises as likely to lead to unique personal experiences, has also frequently been associated with religious leaders. St. Paul

instance, is a typical example, and it is interesting to note how, brought up in an atmosphere of Indian philosophy, he gave a very different view of the world from that of Christ, though his life of practical philanthropy may be compared to that of Christ. Any one who doubts the truth of these statements should read the lives of a few saints and mystics—Inge's "Christian Mysticism" or James' "Varieties of Religious Experience" contain some good examples—and they will see how a saintly nature more often than not shows a tendency to want of balance or even to monomania, the nature of their delusion depending on the way they were brought up. Here I will restrict myself to three comparatively modern examples which illustrate excellently the struggle between reason and feeling.

(*a*) In Bishop Westcott's life we read,[1] that, when he went to Cambridge as an undergraduate, he led a most strenuous life of self-discipline and self-development. Having great mental powers and learning daily more about the facts of life, his mind began to be filled with sceptical doubts. Now, the interesting thing to note is his attitude towards these symptoms of his God-given reason and intellect.[2] Here are some quotations from his diary :—

has already been referred to. That he had epilepsy or some nervous complaint is almost universally admitted.

As regards Mohammed, Professor Wellhausen writes in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," Ed. IX., vol. xvi., p. 547, as follows : "It is disputed whether Mohammed was epileptic, cataleptic, or what not. It is certain that he had a tendency to see visions and suffered from fits which threw him into a swoon without loss of inner consciousness."

St. Francis of Assisi had certainly a tendency to delusions which amounted almost to monomania. George Fox "was a psychopath or detraqué of the deepest dye." The "revelations" made to Swedenborg were preceded by a kind of fit; and his visions can fairly be compared with those of Mohammed.

This list might easily be extended.

[1] "Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott" by his son Arthur Westcott, abridged edition, pp. 30-70, *Macmillan & Co.*, 1905.

[2] Westcott did not actually say his doubts were sent by the

"*February 19th*, 1846.—Walk to Girton with S. He gives me the advice which I earnestly desire to follow. It cannot now be my duty to examine into deep metaphysical points. . . . Why should I be anxious to reject that which has been the stay and comfort of so many? And yet I fear that this is not honest. . . . O Lord, these things are indeed too high for me. Who shall understand them? But do Thou by Thy Holy Spirit guide me through all the storms of reason and speculation. . . . Look on all dear to me and preserve them from doubt.

"*February 28th.*—In the evening our Society meets. After, I have a long walk with V. in our great court, with the brightly shining stars above us, but gloomy, mysterious thoughts in my own mind. But by conversation they are partly removed, and I feel more and more confidence in my declaration of yesterday. The proof of our religion is the religion itself.

"*May 23rd.*—In the evening we have a full meeting and a discussion on the provinces and relative positions of Faith and Reason. V. and S. maintain that Faith is part of Reason. This I am by no means prepared to admit. Nor do I think that reason can find out truth. She can assent to it when discovered. Nor am I sure that the 'Will' is not a separate faculty, distinct from Reason; the passions are, and why may there not be a third faculty in man—a spiritual essence?

devil; but he obviously thought they emanated from the Powers of Evil; and his attitude may fairly be called a nineteenth century edition of that of St. Francis and his followers, of whom Paul Sabatier writes, "The men of the thirteenth century could not bring themselves to not refer to an exterior cause the inner motions of their souls. In what appears to us as the result of our own reflections, they saw inspiration; where we say desires, instincts, passions, they said temptations, but we must not permit these differences of language to make us overlook or tax with trickery a part of their spiritual life, bringing us thus to the conclusions of a narrow and ignorant rationalism.

"St. Francis believed himself to have many a time fought with the devil. . . ." (*Loc. cit.*, p. 191.)

"*December 23rd.*—Now the term is over. How has it been spent? I trust that my intellectual profit has been sound and extensive. I trust that my earnestness for higher objects has not grown colder. My faith is still wavering. I cannot determine how much we *must* believe; how much in fact is necessarily required of a member of the Church.

"*December 31st.*—The past year has been marked by many signal blessings . . . and earnestly I pray . . . that they make me more zealous and more humble in future, for my pride is unsubdued, and still I am harassed by doubt and disbelief, though I do not think that my ambition is as it once was.

"*August 31st*, 1847.—Hooker, V. S. D. Oh, the weakness of my faith compared with that of others! So wild, so sceptical am I. I cannot yield. Lord, look on me; teach me Thy Truth, and let me care for nothing else in evil report and good. Let me uphold nothing as necessary but only Thy truth.

"*May 13th*, 1848.—What a wild storm of unbelief seems to have seized my whole system. Literally to-day I feel 'alone in the world'—but for the few minutes I heard H. Goodwin—'In Me ye shall have peace.' I suppose many feel as I do, and yet I dare look nowhere for sympathy. I cannot describe the feeling with which I regard the hundreds I see around me who conform without an apparent struggle—who seem ever cheerful, ever faithful and believing. It is not joy and satisfaction as it should be; it is not envy, but it is a kind of awe and doubt, a mixture of wonder and suspicion. May it soon be of hearty and sincere sympathy.

"*July 24th.*—There is a wide difference between faith and prudence. What could appear more 'reasonable' than the inquiry of Zachariah which brought his punishment? And thus it is always. Faith is an intuition—a momentary acknowledgment of the heart, spontaneous and perfect."

It is almost humorous to find such a good man with a great mind adopting this attitude towards the workings of his reason, were it not that he must have suffered so much in the struggle. However, it is a most instructive example of the vicious result of inculcating into the ignorant childish mind dogmatic views which the earnest young soul, out of loyalty to all that he loves most, is led to regard as essential to being a follower of Christ.

(*b*) One of the most interesting accounts of the experiences of a practical mind associated with a religious nature that has ever been published is that contained in two volumes, entitled respectively "One of China's Scholars" and "One of China's Christians," written by Mrs. Howard Taylor, and published by the China Inland Mission. The subject of these two volumes is a man called Hsi, who, after becoming a slave to the habit of smoking opium, was able to break the habit only when he came under Christian influence and was helped by a knowledge of Christ's self-sacrificing life, and by faith in the efficacy of his teacher's prayers for him. The account of the struggle which went on in his mind when the supreme moment came to give up the drug is an extraordinarily good description of the sufferings of the victim of a drug habit. By faith he conquered. But his health for some time after was extremely bad; and so we read that in the next three years he seldom took his clothes off, because many a night Satan attacked him, sometimes more than once, and he had to jump out of bed to wrestle against him in prayer ("One of China's Christians," p. 34):—

> "On account of many onslaughts of Satan, my wife and I, for the space of three years, seldom put off our clothing to go to sleep, in order that we might be the more ready to watch and pray. Sometimes in a solitary place, I spent whole nights in prayer, and the Holy Spirit descended. Frequently my mother noticed a light in our bedroom toward midnight, by which she knew that we were still waiting before our Heavenly Father."

Hsi had a good deal of mental ability and immense will-power, so that he put into practice what he believed ; but his belief—as can be readily understood when one realises that he lived in an out-of-the-way place in China —was not formed in conjunction with much knowledge of the world or the facts of history. The way in which his early up-bringing tinctured his belief in later life is a most interesting study. I have room for but two examples. The first illustrates the kind of evidence which convinced his mind that God was trying to teach him the sin of idolatry, and occurred about the year 1880. It is the custom in China to erect in one's hall memorial tablets to the memory of the dead members of one's family. In these tablets are supposed to reside one of the souls of the dead, and so they come to be reverenced with feelings allied to worship, and are regarded by missionaries as promoting idolatry. Hsi had several such tablets in his hall at the time of his " conversion " ; and among others one dedicated to his first wife, for which he may be said to have been specially responsible. It had never occurred to him, on becoming a Christian, that there was any harm in having these tablets, till one morning he found that during the night rats had gnawed away the stand on which the tablet to his wife had stood, causing it to fall to the ground. He was shocked at finding it fallen down and fixed it up on its stand again. Next morning, on finding that rats had again attacked the stand and caused the tablet to fall, he superstitiously asked himself what this should portend. And pondering it over (possibly with the assistance of some Christian), he came to the conclusion that it was " divine leading " to wean him from idolatry. Now, one cannot prove that it was not a " divine leading," but one can ask if coincidence is not a good enough explanation of the fall of this particular tablet, pointing out that the stand which the rats had attacked once, and which therefore attracted them for some reason, was the most likely one to be attacked a second time.

The second example illustrates how Hsi's belief in

demoniac "possession," in which he was brought up, affected his subsequent behaviour as a Christian. He had a considerable reputation in his neighbourhood as a doctor, and we are told three or four remarkable stories of how he was called to treat cases of mental disease of a type which he regarded as "demoniac possession." His practice was to tell the devil in the name of Christ to leave the patient. In the instances given, we are told that his confident and authoritative personality succeeded in calming the patient, (one can see a similar phenomenon in the treatment of certain types of the mentally afflicted in England to-day, where the name of Christ is not invoked, but where only the calm, rational, authoritative personality of the asylum doctor is brought to bear), though it is not clear in any case that the patient was permanently cured. But the interesting point is the effect it had on Hsi himself. It seemed to bring on a kind of delusion in which he thought he was attacked by Satan, and which it took him sometimes hours of prayer and fasting to conquer.

I could go on quoting many more instructive stories from Hsi's life, but this must suffice. Yet any one who really believes in the reality of divine guidance should read this book, as it gives a picture of occurrences in our own day almost similar to many of Christ's miracles recorded in the Gospels; and any one, who is convinced that the author's explanation of and attitude towards Hsi's experiences is reasonable and convincing, will have his faith in Christ's miracles much strengthened.

However, in case I have aroused the reader's interest, I should like to add one last word about the end of Hsi. Being a man of supreme will-power, he subjected himself to extreme tests of fasting and bodily exertion (in taking journeys to do good, etc.) for many years, with the result that he suddenly collapsed one day with acute neurasthenia, and after a few months of prostration, mental and bodily, died at the age of a little over sixty in the year 1896.

(*c*) My third instance is taken from the life of the

Curé of Ars, a saintly man whose memory and life are much revered and quoted by Catholics to support the faith of weaker brethren. I have already given a sketch of his life in a note on p. 172 (Chapter VI.). The present incident I am about to relate illustrates very typically a struggle between reason and faith, resulting in the ultimate triumph of the latter. As I have already said, the curé was such a really good man that thousands flocked to Ars every year to confess to him. In the autumn of 1850 a boy named Maximin, who some months previously had claimed to have been blessed with a vision of the Virgin Mary at a place called La Salette, came to Ars and made his confession. As people were beginning to make pilgrimages to "Our Lady of Salette," the Catholics in Ars were naturally curious to know if the boy had invented the vision, or whether they were to regard it as a genuine visitation from Heaven. So some of the Curé's friends asked him what his view was. To such questions the curé answered, without revealing the details of Maximin's confession, that if the boy had spoken the truth he had no doubt that the whole thing was an invention.

M. Monnin, the biographer of the Curé d'Ars, recounts a conversation he had with him on the subject as follows :—

"*M. M.*—Perhaps there was some misunderstanding on this point."

"*Le Curé.*—No, my friend; the child told me that it was all untrue, that he had seen nothing."

"*M. M.*—Why did not you require of him to make a public recantation ?"

"*Le Curé.*—I said to him : 'My child, if you have told a lie, you must retract it.' 'It is not necessary,' he replied, 'it does good to the people, many of them are converted'" . . .

"*M. M.*—M. le Curé, are you quite sure that you rightly heard what Maximin said to you ?

"*Le Curé.*—Oh, quite sure; many have said that I am deaf." ("Life of the Curé d'Ars," p. 197.)

Shortly after this, it was pronounced by the Bishop of Grenoble that the vision was to be regarded as genuine, and that the pilgrimages to La Salette would have the papal blessing. This created the most painful situation for the curé; for he had to choose between the evidence of his own senses and faith in the infallible judgment of his Church. M. Monnin tells us that the struggle in his mind was agonising, and that it took him eight years before faith completely conquered and he was able to believe that he had not really heard what the boy had told him in the confession, but that it was entirely a delusion caused by the devil.

> "If you did but know," said he one day to a pilgrim, who vouches for the accuracy of the words, "if you did but know how this chills and tortures my heart! Oh, I can bear it no longer! My God, deliver me! When I can shake off the doubt, I am light as a bird! I fly, I fly! But the devil casts me into my doubt again, and then it is as if I were being dragged over flints and thorns." And again he said, when at last he had found peace: "As to me, my friend, I have suffered unspeakably. I was most unhappy for many days. I suffered like a soul in hell. I knew not whether I ought to believe. I wanted to know the truth. At last I determined to say quite simply, I believe. It was as if a stone had fallen from round my neck. I was delivered, I am at peace." ("Life of the Curé d'Ars," p. 119.)

Altogether, the life of the Curé of Ars is a most instructive psychological study, and proves in an extraordinary way what the human will can accomplish if dominated by an obsessing motive, such as faith in a supernatural mission. Thus, for nearly forty years he took a delight in subjecting himself to extreme ascetic practices and for one week he tried to live on grass, although he was holding services or hearing confessions for nearly twenty out of the twenty-four hours. Reading this, it is not surprising to learn that of the four hours he allowed himself for sleep

he seldom got more than two, because almost nightly Satan disturbed him by making noises or throwing him out of bed; and on one occasion Satan actually set fire to his bed! ("The Life of the Curé d'Ars," pp. 112 and 130.)

In the previous note on p. 172, I have already described the two miracles connected with the feeding of his orphans, which bear a close resemblance to the miracle of the widow's cruse recorded in the Old Testament, and a not very distant one to Christ's miracles of feeding multitudes; and I must now refer the interested reader to the book itself, as I have no more space for quoting examples of supernatural guidance from it. But before I leave the subject, I must point out how the idea of supernatural guidance sprang up in the curé's mind, and how it was based essentially on his experience as a child. Brought up in a Catholic atmosphere, he was taught to approach God through some saint. Now one day, when quite a small boy, he and his elder brother were reaping corn, and he was piqued to find that his elder and stronger brother got on quicker than he did himself. Then, happening to have on him a little cheap image of the Virgin Mary which some one had given him not long before, he thought he would try if it could help him. So he put this image on the ground a few yards away from him, and, praying for help to the Blessed Virgin, started to work up to this, and thereupon he found that he managed to work even quicker than his brother. From that day his faith in the efficacy of the Virgin's assistance was confirmed, and through the rest of his life he regarded intercession to God through the saints as peculiarly effective, his favourite agents being the Virgin Mary, St. John the Baptist, St. Philomena, and St. John Francis Regis (pp. 16, 22, 56, 57). Finally, it is interesting to note that the mainspring of his piety apparently derived its energy from a desire to save his soul. Thus on two occasions he tried to run away from the busy—and presumably useful—life he was leading at Ars in order to enter a retreat to do penance for the sake of his soul. This dominant motive, which amounted

to pronounced monomania, is thus described by his biographer in the chapter devoted to an account of the persecutions he endured from Satan :—

> " As soon as M. Vianney (*i.e.*, the Curé) felt convinced that the noises were preternatural, he dismissed his useless guard, and in time grew accustomed to them.
>
> " This persecution went on with more or less of violence for a period of thirty years. It had been preceded by one so much more terrible as to make the exterior conflict light in comparison. The holy curé was for a long time haunted by a continual and piercing terror of hell. He seemed to see it always beneath his feet, and to hear a voice telling him that his place there was marked out for him.
>
> " The fear of being lost pursued him day and night and, in comparison with it, all succeeding terrors seemed endurable." (" The Life of the Curé d'Ars," p. 123.)

These few instances are sufficient, I think, to prove to any reasonable mind the value of personal experience as a reason for faith, taken apart from arguments which satisfy the intellect. As regards the experiences themselves, they may be looked upon as manifestations of what is highest or most Godlike in man, that is, mental qualities which tend to differentiate animal man of the present day from his more animal ancestors of generations ago. But to quote them as evidence of some particular view of the Cosmos and of the forces which govern man's life is quite useless. Every instance shows that the particular form of our experiences is given by the particular mental atmosphere in which we are brought up, and so has no evidential value in support of the supernatural.[1]

[1] The truth of this statement is also well illustrated by the attitude of Finow, the intelligent savage chief already referred to on p. 225 of this chapter, towards the teaching of the Tongan priests a hundred years ago. For we find in " Mariner's Tonga " the following instructive passage : " Finow had often stated to Mr. Mariner his doubts that there were such beings as gods. He

Again, our own personal experiences are of little help to others unless they have similar experiences; therefore they do not carry much weight when quoted in support of some contentious point of view. As I have frequently had occasion to remark, all truth is built up on experience, so that the reader must not quote me as decrying the value of experience. Yet it is personal experience, capable of being tested by sensation or by reduction to a necessity of thought, which alone is of much use as evidence, for in this case it can soon be confirmed or refuted by the experience of others, and so be used in helping mankind in the search after truth.

Perhaps it is really fortunate that we must discount as untrustworthy personal religious experiences or revelations, because there are such varieties, and they are often so contradictory that it would be impossible to treat them all as divine revelations of truth. For, even from a theological point of view, I know of no principle by which one can pick out the true and reject the false. Thus, apart from the bias of a man's religious upbringing, it is not clear why he should be more impressed by Swedenborg's revelations and visions than by those of Mohammed, or *vice versa*. And the trance-like visions of the Quaker mystic, George Fox, may easily be compared to the seven visions of the Catholic anchoress, Juliana of Norwich, who belonged to a Church which George Fox was never tired of vilifying.

However, in characterising personal religious experiences as untrustworthy, I do not wish to minimise the import-

thought that men were fools to believe what the priests told them. Mr. Mariner expressed his wonder that he should doubt their existence, when he acknowledged that he had more than once felt himself inspired by the spirit of Moomoe. 'True,' replied the king, 'there may be gods, but what the priests tell us about their power over mankind I believe to be all false.'" Here we see that Finow's own religious experiences did not impress him in such a way as to make him believe in the teachings of the Tongan priests, who failed to support their views with convincing arguments; and also that the explanation he gave to his own experiences owed its origin entirely to his upbringing.

ance of the voice of conscience, or the "Inner Light," as George Fox called it. It is one of the most useful guides we have in the moral sphere; but, on the one hand, it is dependent on the intellect, and on the other it is influenced by abnormal states of the brain, both structural and functional, so that to regard it as a divine voice in the supernatural sense is apt to lead a man into the most irrational acts. This has always been recognised by the Roman Catholic Church, which, while having included among its members many mystics who have approached very nearly to the Quaker point of view, has always denied an absolute value to private judgment and has set up a standard of authority—the infallibility of the Pope—by which to control all its members' actions. Therefore logically there is no alternative for a man who believes that Christ bequeathed the gift of the Holy Ghost to mankind, and that the voice of conscience is divine in a supernatural sense, except to obey that voice in an absolute sense or join the Roman Catholic Church in virtue of its claim to authority. But as the thoughtful reader's reason is unlikely to be convinced by the claims of infallibility of the Roman Catholic Church, considering the history of that Church's authoritative acts,[1] there is no alternative left him, in a case where his reason and conscience clash, than to accept or reject the divinity of Christ and all that is involved therein, including the mission of the Holy Ghost. This to my mind is the crux of the whole question, the whole difficulty which can only be decided in practice. And I believe it is the chief difficulty felt by earnest modern minds. For I have often read in recent years some such passage as this:—"Few would give 'Paley's Evidences' as the reason for their

[1] It was a change of conviction on the subject of the date and authorship of the Book of Daniel that drove M. Renan out of the Roman Catholic Church. "For the Catholic Church to confess," he says in his "Souvenirs," "that Daniel is an apocryphal book of the time of the Maccabees, would be to confess that She had made a mistake; if She had made this mistake, She may have made others, She is no longer divinely inspired."

faith, which in the present day rests rather on personal experience." It is, in fact, quite logical for a man to say: "However good your arguments may be in throwing doubt on the divinity of Christ and the divine nature of the voice of conscience, I am not going to give up my faith, because I find it works, and a particle of practice is worth any amount of theory." And as a matter of fact, wonderful success has often attended those mystics who have practically and more or less logically followed their conscience as if it were an infallible voice. But others, alas, have followed it to a suicide's grave, or to a lunatic asylum.

This difficulty, then, is also answered, that, as it does not work in practice with any certainty, the voice of conscience is not an absolute guide, and so man's reason is the only safe authority. But it may be objected that, just as men differ widely from one another, so their reason varies. This is quite true, and it is not easy to define exactly the nature of what constitutes reasonable authority to which to submit one's own private judgment. For it is not the common-sense of all mankind taken in the aggregate. Rather it is the reasoned judgment of all those members of a community who may be said both to be enjoying good health (of body and mind) and to know the facts of life. Strictly speaking, this includes only a small number of people; but their judgment filters through to the masses, and is accepted by the majority of the community, who find that in practice it works. According to this definition, then, reasonable authority from a practical point of view might be very different in different communities and nations. In fact, it is impossible to have an absolute or infallible standard of authority; but the views of the most enlightened and cultured nation would come nearest to that conception.

RATIONAL ALTRUISM

OR

THE GOSPEL OF COMMON-SENSE

" We live in the world as it is, and not in the world as we want it to be, that is the practical rule by which we steer, and in directing our lives, we must constantly consider the forces and practicabilities of the social medium in which we move " (p. 146).

" The true Church towards which my own thoughts tend will be the conscious illuminated expression of Catholic brotherhood. It must, I think, develop out of the existing medley of Church fragments, and out of all that is worthy in our poetry and literature, just as the world-wide Socialist state at which I aim must develop out of such state and casual economic organisation and constructive movements as exist to-day " (p. 156).

" The Reformation, the Reconstruction of the Catholic Church, lies still before us. It is a necessary work. It is a work strictly parallel to the reformation and expansion of the organised State. Together these processes constitute the general duty before mankind " (p. 157). (" First and Last Things," by H. G. Wells.)

CHAPTER IX

Rational Altruism or the Gospel of Common-Sense

At this stage of the book it will readily be understood that in the title of this chapter I am referring to that variety of common-sense possessed by the man or woman who knows the facts of life; for to the biassed and ignorant most of this book will appear nonsense. I am inserting this chapter—though it touches on a number of subjects which are really foreign to the intention of this work—because I am aware that many religious, earnest and well-meaning people will be filled with the reflection that it is much easier to criticise old beliefs than create new ones, and that, however true much of what is here written may be, they are not going to change the beliefs of their childhood for a negative position which gives them nothing in return. To such, while admitting that the tendency of this book is certainly destructive, I submit that there is a great deal which is constructive and helpful to leading a happy, useful life in a rational agnostic position, and that at this stage of the world's intellectual development a belief in the superstitious teachings of dogmatic Christianity is for many individuals positively demoralising and productive of hypocrisy. Winwood Reade expresses this danger forcibly where he says:—

> "The religion of the Africans, whether pagan or moslem, is suited to their intellects, and is therefore a true religion; and the same may be said of Christianity among uneducated people. But Christianity is not in accordance with the cultivated mind; it can only be accepted or rather retained by suppressing

doubts, and by denouncing inquiry as sinful. It is therefore a superstition and ought to be destroyed. With respect to the services which it once rendered to civilisation, I cheerfully acknowledge them; but the same argument might once have been advanced in favour of the oracle at Delphi, without which there would have been no Greek culture and therefore no Christianity. The question is not whether Christianity assisted the civilisation of our ancestors, but whether it is now assisting our own. I am firmly persuaded that whatever is injurious to the intellect is also injurious to moral life; and on this conviction I base my conduct with respect to Christianity." ("Martyrdom of Man," p. 525.)

Likewise Carlyle waxes very eloquent over the immorality of belief opposed by the intellect, when he writes:—

"Why is idolatry so hateful to Prophets? It seems to me as if, in the worship of these poor wooden symbols, the thing that had chiefly provoked the Prophet and filled His inmost soul with indignation and aversion was not exactly what suggested itself to his own thought and came out of him in words to others, as the thing. The rudest heathen that worshipped Canopus or the Caabah Black-Stone, he, as we saw, was superior to the horse that worshipped nothing at all! Nay, there was a kind of lasting merit in that poor act of his, analogous to what is still meritorious in poets: recognition of a certain endless divine beauty and significance in stars and all natural objects whatever. Why should the prophet so mercilessly condemn him? The poorest mortal worshipping his Fetish, while his heart is full of it, may be an object of pity, of contempt and avoidance, if you will, but cannot surely be an object of hatred. Let his heart be honestly full of it, the whole space of his dark narrow mind illuminated thereby; in one word, let him entirely believe in his Fetish,—it will

then be, I should say, if not well with him, yet as well as it can readily be made to be, and you will leave him alone, unmolested there.

"But here enters the fatal circumstance of Idolatry, that, in the era of the Prophets, no man's mind is any longer honestly filled with his Idol or Symbol. Before the Prophet can arise who, seeing through it, knows it to be mere wood, many men must have begun dimly to doubt that it was little more. Condemnable Idolatry is insincere Idolatry. Doubt has eaten out the heart of it: a human soul is seen clinging spasmodically to an Ark of the Covenant, which it half feels now to have become a Phantasm. This is one of the balefullest sights. Souls are no longer filled with their Fetish, but only pretend to be filled, and would fain make themselves feel that they are filled. "You do not believe," said Coleridge, "you only believe that you believe." It is the final scene in all kinds of worship and symbolism, the sure symptom that death is now nigh. It is equivalent to what we call Formulism and Worship of Formulas in these days of ours. No more immoral act can be done by a human creature; for it is the beginning of all immorality, or rather, it is the impossibility henceforth of any morality whatsoever; the innermost moral soul is paralysed thereby, cast into fatal magnetic sleep! Men are no longer sincere men. I do not wonder that the earnest man denounces this, brands it, prosecutes it with inextinguishable aversion. He and it, all good and it, are at death-feud. Blamable Idolatry is Cant and even what one may call Sincere Cant. Sincere Cant: that is worth thinking of! Every sort of worship ends with this phasis." ("Heroes and Hero-Worship," Lecture 4.)

Let us now sum up the main losses which the orthodox Christian incurs in giving up a belief in the intervention of the "supernatural" in human affairs, particularly as affecting the Divinity of Christ and the

supernatural claims made on His behalf by the various Christian Churches.

They are mainly three: *First*: belief that a Divine Creator is sufficiently interested in the fate of man to sacrifice His own Son is an immense comfort and support in hours of temptation and difficulty. And belief in the revealed nature of the teaching of that Son makes it possible to enunciate a dogmatic code which appears to simplify the teaching of morality. *Secondly*: belief in prayer, whereby God hears us, and in the divine nature of the voice of conscience, whereby we unerringly hear God, is again the greatest help in times of difficulty, and a wonderful incentive to carrying out what we believe to be our life's work or vocation. *Thirdly*: belief in immortality and in the Day of Judgment not only cheers us when we see the inequalities and selfishness of this world, but also provides a motive for leading a moral life.

Against these losses it may well be asked, What can the agnostic offer? But before answering this question, it is important that I should again make perfectly clear what I mean by the word "agnostic." By an "agnostic" I mean one who humbly says, "I do not know," when any problem is propounded for the solution of which he does not consider mankind possesses the facts, as for instance, the nature and origin of matter and the creation of the universe; the nature of life and the relation of mind to matter; the origin of evil and questions of time and space, including that of immortality. But this does not prevent him from very definitely saying, "I have so little doubt that it amounts to certainty" in problems, which are capable of a scientific proof, or in which the probabilities are all against dogmatic orthodox teaching. Also I insist that he does not necessarily demand a scientific proof, but permits himself for practical purposes to say, "Such is my opinion" in questions like the divinity of Christ, the intervention of the supernatural in witchcraft or modern spiritualism, the age of the world, etc., because in all these problems he considers he has sufficient data to form a reasonable opinion, based on the balance

of probabilities. In short, not only is the agnostic's position scientifically negative, but it is also positive, removing far more difficulties than it creates, unlike the dogmatic teaching of the various Churches. Consequently, an agnostic is not a man who is afraid of saying, "I know," when he is urged by reason rather than by feeling to say so.[1]

Further, the agnostic does not pretend that his view of the world is necessarily conducive to cheerfulness or happiness as defined by the Christian Churchman, or that it is in accordance with what mankind would wish; as for instance in the very human wish that we shall be repaid for evil and suffering here by happiness and reward in another life. What he maintains as his guiding star is a love of truth, in the belief that, even if a faithful following of this star apparently leads to unhappiness at first, in the long run it will increase the sum of human happiness by making mankind aware of the real nature of the forces acting on him and thus enabling him to adapt himself to his environment and harness these forces in his service instead of struggling against them. To quote once more from "The Martyrdom of Man":—"I maintain that, even should the present generation be injured by the abolition of existing faiths, yet abolition would be justified. Succeeding generations would breathe an atmosphere of truth instead of being reared in an atmosphere of falsehood, and we who are so deeply indebted to our ancestors have incurred obligations towards our posterity. Let us therefore purify the air, and if the light kills a few sickly plants which have become acclimatised to impurity and darkness, we must console ourselves with the reflection that in Nature it is always so, and that of two evils we have chosen that which is least. But the dangers of the truth are not so great as is commonly supposed."[2] And yet, notwithstanding the fact that

[1] Huxley, as the originator of the term "Agnostic" must be quoted not only for a definition of the term but also in regard to the losses and gains of "Agnosticism." These passages, as they are rather long, are given in Appendix O.

[2] "The Martyrdom of Man," by Winwood Reade, pp. 526, 530.

" great revolutions cannot be accomplished without much anguish and some evil being caused," the agnostic's position is a stimulating one, and enables him from two points of view, in particular, to look forward to the future with confidence and energy. For, first of all, by adopting the agnostic position, we avoid the supposed antagonism between religion and science without sacrificing one jot of the religious spirit. As partisans of various Churches we are so apt to forget that a man, whom orthodoxy dubs an atheist, often leads a life actuated by a truly religious spirit, and that on the other hand it is not an unknown phenomenon to find a consecrated priest living a life of practical atheism. Everyone in fact has a religion whether he knows it or no; and the test of religion is worship. One man worships gold and the power it gives; another worships truth. Thus the Heavenly Father or God Creator of the world, whose attributes the humble Christian admits may not improbably transcend the limits of human intelligence, in spite of the fact that early Christian art pictured Him as an aged man with a beard, is not so different from the God worshipped by the man of science, who devotes his life to trying to understand His laws, and who symbolises Him under the terms of Truth, Justice and Love. At the same time, of course there always will be antagonism between science and the various dogmatic religious systems.

Secondly, as knowledge becomes extended, and as scientific or exact methods of thought become more universal, the faith which mankind has hitherto put in the various old dogmatic explanations of the world and mysteries of life must necessarily weaken and be replaced by a truer realisation of the possibilities and limitations of human destiny. It is therefore most important that the enlightened pioneers of this age who realise what is coming should do their best to devise means how mankind may be led along paths of rational altruism. For, as has been truly said, (and pointed out at some length in a book like " Social Evolution " by Benjamin Kidd,) man is essentially a religious animal, and in the downfall of

the ancient supernatural faiths his religious sense may get such a shock as to induce a state of emotional anarchy, if a rational outlet for his feelings of worship is not prepared beforehand.

What, then, is the message or Gospel which the agnostic has for the world? It is essentially a message proclaiming Truth, Justice and Love as principles to be worshipped. Truth, because by knowledge alone can man fit himself to his environment. Justice, because it is a law that every one reaps as he sows. Love, because of the inherent altruistic or self-sacrificing tendency in all living beings.[1] There may be apparent exceptions to both these last statements; but if the joys attending the perfection of mental (or, in Christian language, of "spiritual") qualities be admitted to be the highest happiness, then every one damages his own happiness in proportion as he violates the best he is capable of. Thus, a man who indulges in animal pleasure solely for its own sake, especially in sexual indulgence and the pleasures of eating and drinking, soon loses the feeling of mental power and fitness which is the reward of a healthy and temperate mode of life. Respect for Justice, further, rests on the necessity that there should be internal harmony in any society which aims at being stable. Mankind is still divided into various social groups, like a herd of wolves or hive of bees; and there is a continuous struggle for existence going on between these groups. Therefore any internal want of

[1] The word "love" is used here in much the same sense as "good-will," based on the golden rule, "Do to others as you would that they should do to you," which was taught by Confucius as long ago as 500 B.C.

The inherent altruistic instinct is well illustrated in the case of savages by the following passage from "Mariner's Tonga":—"Many of the chiefs, on being asked by Mr. Mariner what motives they had for conducting themselves with propriety, besides the fear of misfortunes in this life, replied, the agreeable and happy feeling which a man experiences within himself when he does any good action, or conducts himself nobly or generously, as a man ought to do. And this question they answered as if they wondered such should be asked." (Vol. ii., p. 131.)

harmony can easily become a source of weakness, and lead to a state or nation losing its liberty and being incorporated in a stronger, which ultimately may be for its own good and that of the human race. It is this struggle for existence among nations which leads to the development of patriotism—that almost universal manifestation of the religious sense—or willingness on the part of the individual to sacrifice himself for love of the community. An analogous tendency, clearly expressed by the word "altruism," is developed in a small number of enlightened individuals, who realise the solidarity of human beings as a whole, into a genuine love of mankind, which induces them to sacrifice personal pecuniary advantage for the sake of doing work for the good of unborn generations by trying to add to the sum of human happiness or knowledge.

This kind of love, which is rational rather than emotional, certainly sometimes produces very different results from what Christian ministers are in the habit of teaching is the outcome of love. Therefore, after what has been said about cruelty in nature, I am quite prepared to hear some one objecting to the inclusion of love as an attribute of the agnostic's "God." And in a narrow sentimental definition of the word "love" I think their objection is justified. But when love is defined as acting for the happiness and fitness of the human race, this objection cannot be sustained.

Let us for a moment glance over the history of living beings on the earth and try to discover the first signs of altruism and study the course of its development. There can be no question that among vegetables and the lower forms of life a continuous and remorseless struggle for existence is and always has been taking place, with the result that those individuals most suited to their environment have survived, and have transmitted to their descendants certain qualities, which, evolved in the course of generations into definite characteristics, have led to the formation of new species. Now, owing to this struggle for existence, differentiation of function has become a

necessity, and among other differentiations that of sex proves to have been one of the most important. Among certain low forms of animal life, called protozoa, reproduction is effected—as in an amœba, which consists of merely a single cell—by a process of fission or budding off from the parent cell. The parent cell retains its individuality, but the progeny are not so strong as the parent, so that the power of reproduction is, perhaps, at last lost. The race, however, is not thus brought to a premature end, because an alternative method of reproduction has been developed, in which two individuals coalesce and then divide to form two or more descendants which have all the reproductive power of their parents.[1] By this act of coalescence we see two distinct cells losing their individuality and bringing their own distinct existence as such to an end for the sake of future generations. This, to my mind, is a clear case of altruism or self-sacrifice, and is correlated, it will be noted, with the struggle for existence which men in their ignorance have been wont to call cruel. How life first appeared on the earth; why reproduction should have become a necessary consequence of life, tending as it does to accentuate the struggle for existence; how differentiation into male and female elements first started; these and like questions are problems about which we may speculate, but to which mankind has not—and possibly never will have—sufficient knowledge to give an answer.

Doubtless associated with this simple form of sexual union there is a pleasurable, emotional, instinctive sensation, which, developed through ages of evolution into a conscious feeling, capable of being expressed in

[1] "Amoebæ multiply by fission in a manner similar to that described for the bell-animalcule; the nucleus first divides, the cell becoming subsequently cleft in two. Occasionally an amoeba has been seen to engulf another of smaller size than itself; and there is reason to believe that this process, originally thought to have been one of cannibalism, may probably be one of conjugation of dissimilar individuals for reproduction, such as is seen in the bell-animalcule." ("Practical Biology," p. 373, by Huxley & Martin, revised edition, Macmillan & Co., London, 1889.)

words, we call the pleasure of feeling we have done our duty, or fulfilled the best of which we are capable.

The next stage in sexual differentiation, seen in rather more complicated forms of protozoan life, is that where each individual has certain cells differentiated into male organs and other cells differentiated into female organs —a condition technically called "Hermaphroditism." These individuals are sometimes also capable of budding, but the race is perpetuated essentially by union between male cells and female cells. The individuals themselves grow old and wear out with the process, but their progeny prosper, so that we again see the sacrifice of individuals for the good of the race.

In more complex and differentiated organisms we next find individuals which possess only male cells and others which possess only female cells; and now reproduction by budding is unknown. We have reached a stage of differentiation common to all the vertebrates, including man. The individual wears out in reproducing itself and in rearing its young. The perpetual development of individuality is incompatible with reproduction, and under natural conditions among animals individuality is practically always sacrificed. A female will often risk her own life for the sake of her young, while the males usually protect their female companions and sometimes share in the work of rearing the young family. Among human beings there are many instances on record where a mother, for the sake of her child, has instinctively faced some frightful danger, the mere thought of which under other conditions would have led to her complete collapse. Thus we see the so-called maternal instinct illustrating in a marked degree the same altruistic tendency which we have already noticed existing in spite of the struggle for existence.

This is one of the most curious mysteries of life, how the tendency to self-sacrifice associated with reproduction should have developed alongside of the tendency to self-development, or the accentuation of individuality associated with the struggle for existence. Yet self-sacrifice

associated with reproduction is not the only form of altruism. There are others which almost may be said to result from the struggle for existence. As organisms get more complex and differentiated, it is found that union is strength; and so arise communities of individuals which unite for the common good and so indirectly for the good of each member. The struggle for existence still goes on between different communities, but in each community a very high degree of self-sacrifice, or patriotism, may be reached. Thus in a hive of bees there is a wonderful degree of differentiation and order, and nearly all the work is done for the common good, and every worker-bee is ready to attack a foe and use its sting, although thereby its own life is often brought to a premature end.

This is the stage of development reached in varying degrees by man and by many other mammals, though certain carnivora, owing to the nature of their diet, are characterised by habits which are anti-social to a large extent. The next stage will be reached when the majority of mankind have minds more influenced by abstract conceptions, and then very interesting developments of the altruistic tendency are likely to take place. I shall have a few words of speculation to say on this subject, but first I must point out how these two principles of self-sacrifice and self-development are blended in the healthy normal human being. As I have shown, these two tendencies are developed in the simplest forms of life and have existed through countless generations. Therefore it is most important to recognise that these two tendencies must be among the most ingrained and primal instincts which we possess and which every day make themselves felt. As we ascend in the scale of evolution and reach mankind, these tendencies are developed into the most complex manifestations. But the primitive struggle is still going on between developing individuality in the struggle for existence and sacrificing individuality for the sake of children or of the community or for that of future generations. And here language becomes difficult.

For although morality (or the attempt to do one's duty and fulfil one's functions in life) exists among animals and is not peculiar to human beings, yet, with the development of mind and the predominating influence of ideas, actions get almost a new significance and become symbols of ideas. Thus selfishness and unselfishness are words which imply the possession of a considerable degree of intelligence, and are therefore really only applicable to men, who, more or less realising the responsibilities and possibilities conferred by the possession of mind, respectively give way to or abstain from acts worthier of their animal ancestors. An intelligent sheep-dog shows by its actions that it knows quite well that it is doing wrong if it has been lazy and refused to work; and, similarly, a terrier, which I once possessed, would sometimes deliberately chase sheep, knowing that it was wrong, and then come back to me quite prepared to be punished. On the other hand, nearly all animals are what we should call greedy, and yet we do not call them selfish or reprove them for selfishness. Under natural conditions the indulgence of animal appetite works almost automatically and instinctively. But in educated man the possession of mind enables him to realise the nature of abstract ideals which can be symbolised by action. If, then, he indulges his animal appetites symbolically, that is for the purpose of making the best of his qualities and fulfilling his function in the world, he cannot be said to act selfishly, because he is only obeying the primitive tendencies inherent in all living beings. But if he indulges his animal appetites to excess, that is for their own sake, he may be said to act selfishly, because, knowing how he can help on the evolution of the human race along lines of intellectual development and of mental culture, he neglects to do so. For it is owing to the development of intelligence that man already possesses his commanding position in the world; and it is in connection with mental culture that the unalloyed joys of creative effort are felt. In fact, selfishness may be roughly defined as the neglect of duty without laying down a dogmatic rule what any particular

individual's duty may be. Thus the individual possessing a healthy mind in a healthy body, who attains the golden mean, is one who combines animal enjoyment of life and development of his individual body and mind with a firm adherence to duty, which is certain to entail more or less self-sacrifice. Extremes in either direction are unhealthy, and yet we often cannot help admiring such individuals owing to their illustrating in a high degree one of the two primeval principles in all living beings. Thus we cannot help admiring the wonderful organising and military genius of Napoleon (which he was able to develop so highly in the course of his career), and we call him a great man, although we must recognise that, in as far as he used his gifts for his own personal gratification rather than for adding to the happiness and development of the world, he was an extremely selfish man. At the same time, we do not call him a selfish man for developing his genius, but only for the unworthy way in which he often used it. Similarly, taking the opposite extreme, there is a beauty in the life of St. Francis of Assisi which appeals strongly to the altruistic tendency in all of us, and yet we must recognise that he carried altruism to the verge of morbidity. His unselfishness and love of poverty were carried to such an extreme degree, as would check, if generally imitated, the development of man and lead to his deterioration.

Development, as the reader by now must clearly see, is essentially the result of struggle. Struggle among animals with little mind results chiefly in bodily change suiting the species more and more to its environment. But in man, whose mental development is associated with the upright position and the predominant use of the hand for grasping, there probably will not be any marked alteration in bodily structure produced by future cycles of struggle. The only change will be in the amount of cerebral development with which are correlated mental qualities, and especially human intelligence. Already there is more difference between the brain of a " Grote " [1]

[1] The brain of the historian George Grote, F.R.S., was preserved

and of an Australian aboriginal than between the latter and that of an anthropoid ape. It is easy to show from history that the moral and intellectual qualities of nations have been developed almost proportionately to the struggle to which they have been submitted. The ancient Egyptians and the more modern Venetians are both good examples of the truth of this statement.[1] As a contrast to this, in certain islands of the Pacific, where the needs of the population are entirely satisfied by a luxuriant vegetation and by fisheries, and where enemies have been few in number, we see the natives have grown indolent and are probably less intelligent than their predecessors. They have had so little need to occupy themselves with work, that what fighting they have done has been among themselves almost as an

after his death and was described by Professor Marshall, F.R.S., in the *Journal of Anatomy and Physiology*, vol. xxvii., p. 21, October, 1892. The surface of the cerebral hemispheres was increased to a wonderful extent and was in consequence folded in the most complex way. Professor Marshall wrote:—"Were I asked to indicate the most striking characteristic of Mr. Grote's cerebrum, I should reply, the great breadth, distinctness and volume of the convolutions generally."

The brain of an Australian aboriginal, on the contrary, like that of an anthropoid ape, is devoid of complex folding, while the convolutions are not very distinct and tend to be symmetrical on the two sides, a feature which Professor Marshall calls a "remarkable difference." Any one interested in the subject will find figures of the brains of the lower races of mankind, as well as of the anthropoid apes, in Duckworth's "Morphology and Anthropology" (Cambridge Press, 1904). The difference between these and the figure of Grote's brain, given in Professor Marshall's paper, is very striking.

[1] Winwood Reade in the first chapter of the "Martyrdom of Man" gives a sketch of the history of mankind, illustrating the influence of struggle on nations, and shows very clearly in the case of the Ancient Egyptians that a big population, shut in along the valley of the Nile by desert on either side, found the struggle for existence very acute, and that this resulted in the development of an extremely high degree of intelligence, associated, as it happened, with a religion supported by a numerous and powerful priesthood and characterised by a complicated ritual.

amusement to kill time.[1] And in our own day the most selfish men would probably be found among the children of wealthy parents, who had left them sufficient means to free them from the necessity of struggling for themselves. Thus a struggle for existence is by no means to be looked upon as an evil. It is associated with a great deal of self-sacrifice, and though the individual may suffer—an idea well expressed by Winwood Reade in the title of his book "The Martyrdom of Man"—yet future generations will be more consciously happy; and more sources of joy, mental, artistic, and material are every generation becoming accessible to the average man. In short, mankind as a whole is benefiting at the expense of individual men. In this sense the agnostic ideal of self-sacrifice is rightly named love, just as much as the maternal instinct.

Now for a glance at the future. At the present day, as I have already said, men are divided into nations, each one roughly comparable to a hive of bees, and a moral code results from the necessity of "give and take" in any stable social community. In different communities the moral code is somewhat different. But some day the code may be uniform, when all men realise the common bonds between them. Nevertheless that time is far distant, and meanwhile the struggle between different nations is productive of fine qualities, moral and intellectual, as it affords a stimulus to individual effort for winning the approbation of fellow-citizens by working for the good of the State. One hears much said about the horrors of war at Peace Congresses and elsewhere, and the belief expressed that war will some day cease, because it is becoming so expensive. Now, it certainly is to be hoped that war will some day cease; but not, I maintain, for

[1] For instance, in Vavaoo, one of the Tongan group of islands, there is an archway of three enormous stones, which it must have taken considerable engineering skill to cut and erect. Now, when Mariner was there a century ago, the Tongans were unable to say what was its use and history, and were quite incapable of erecting a similar monument themselves.

this reason. Fear of expense is akin to love of money, and is altogether a materialistic motive. We may have faith that mankind will agree to abolish war some day, because it is felt to be a hindrance to the intelligent evolution of mankind. But in that day some stimulus to effort will have been devised or evolved to take its place; for, if the struggle for existence, which has so far developed man, be removed and nothing take its place, it is a practical certainty that man will deteriorate intellectually and morally. Can we not dream of and work for a time when the whole world will be organised on rational lines, every one doing the work for which he is best fitted and every one aiming at winning undying fame by having done good work for future generations rather than aiming at the accumulation of wealth? If, then, this appears to the reader as a not impossible picture of the future, he can promote its coming by doing his best to spread a love of truth; as it will only be by a universal realisation of the forces controlling man's destiny that they can be rationally directed and utilised for the increase of human happiness.

Likewise the agnostic reformer realises the necessity of acquiring all the facts of social problems, both those affecting moral health as well as those affecting bodily health, before offering a solution. Some day we may hope that all society will be organised on rational lines, somewhat after the picture, drawn by Karl Pearson, of the modern scientific state.[1] There he shows that every man should be encouraged by training to do that for which he is most fitted by inheritance and natural qualities, and that the path from one walk of life to another should not be made too easy. At the same time, opportunity should be given to individual effort to do its best and get its due reward, and to exceptional genius to rise from any step to the top rung of the ladder. He shows how different professions and trades should be

[1] "Encyclopædia Britannica," Ed. X., Introductory Essay to vol. xxxii.

organised, with one exception, namely, that of the clergy, about which he is silent. Therefore it may be of interest if I try to draw a picture of what I imagine the agnostic minister of the future will be like. He will be a servant of the State, trained to teach morality, just as at present in England the State trains schoolmasters to teach the three " R's " and other branches of commercial knowledge. His training, which will include a general knowledge of history and science as well as special courses in biology, psychology (morbid and normal), and sociology, will be such as to enable him to give really useful advice to those who consult him with mental troubles ; and it is possible that the treatment of mental disease will pass from the overworked doctor or general practitioner into the hands of this class of the community. Like that of medicine or teaching in schools, it will be a profession which only those with more or less vocation will join. But a man will not take up the teaching of morality as his profession because he thinks he is supernaturally called to that work in life ; and so he will avoid many inconsistencies and be saved from that confusion of ideas, characteristic of clergy of the present day who try to combine a " supernatural " vocation with a worldly profession. His teaching will aim at inculcating in each child a true love of duty both to the State and to his neighbour, based on a knowledge of the forces surrounding human beings and illustrated by facts drawn from history and science. Neither the Koran nor the Bible nor any other book will be elevated into the position of an inspired fetish, but heroes of all times and creeds will be held up as types to be admired, and from whom lessons may be learnt. The life of Christ will be taught, but not to the neglect of the lives of Buddha and Socrates ; while the martyrs of science will be as much venerated as the saints of the Church.

It is many centuries probably before such a profession will arise, for in matters concerned with the teaching of morality mankind is essentially conservative and swayed by the bias of childhood's upbringing. But meanwhile

any Church[1] which, honestly examining the grounds of its belief in the "supernatural," can confess that they are inadequate, has a splendid opportunity of earning the love of future generations and of leading mankind along the path of rational altruism, getting a hold not only of its members' emotions but also of their reasons.

This sketch of man's destiny may appear to be rather wandering away from my subject; but nevertheless, it gives, I think, the lines along which agnostic ideals are likely to develop; so that I need not treat at much length of some other positive gains of agnosticism. The chief ones are as follows:—

1. Duty rather than "other-worldliness" becomes a guiding motive. The man, who believes in the necessity of saving his soul (in a supernatural sense), and of coming out well at the Day of Judgment, is always in danger of subconsciously being actuated by a selfish motive.[2]

[1] Professor Seeley, in his "Natural Religion," p. 212, was one of the first to point out the need for State organisation in the teaching of morality. The following quotation gives a good idea of the nature of the reorganised State Church, for which he argues so eloquently:—"If we really believe that a case can be made out for civilisation, this case must be presented by popular teachers, and their most indispensable qualification will be independence. They perhaps will be able to show that happiness, or even universal comfort is not, and never has been, within quite so easy reach that it cannot be taken by storm, and that as for the institutions left us from the past, they are no more diabolical than they are divine, being the fruit of necessary development far more than of freewill or calculation. Such teachers would be the free clergy of modern civilisation. It would be their business to investigate and to teach the true relation of man to the Universe and to Society, the true Ideal he should worship, the true vocation of particular nations, the course which the history of mankind has taken hitherto, in order that upon a full view of what is possible and desirable men may live and organise themselves for the future."

I would recommend the reader interested in the Church of the future to get Wells' "First and Last Things," as well as Professor Seeley's "Natural Religion."

[2] "Other-worldliness" is a case of more or less pure selfishness; as a man's reward in another life cannot be shown to contribute to the happiness of future generations. Savage, in his book, entitled "Religion in the Light of the Darwinian Doctrine," has

For the agnostic, on the other hand, a good action is its own reward; and, in as far as he has an eye to the future, his only motive can be to win the respect of unborn generations.

2. The agnostic's morality does not rest on dogmatic authority, and the facts, on which his moral code is based, are capable of verification. Therefore he is not so liable to moral lapses and to hypocritical conduct as his neighbour whose intellect rebels against his professed beliefs.

3. The agnostic is likely to be characterised by charity in its widest sense. Realising how different are the factors surrounding different individuals, he acts on the motto, "Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner." At the same time, he does not shut his eyes to the unhappy results of so-called "sin" in the world, but realises the necessity for treating moral abnormalities on curative lines, just as the commonly recognised forms of mental disease are treated in asylums. Society for its own protection may be under the necessity of preventing criminals from doing harm; but in the future, with the predominance of agnostic ideals, attempts will be increasingly made to cure the criminals. Hitherto society has adopted a revengeful attitude towards crime, which in Christian countries has often been characterised by cruelty under the name of trying "to drive out the devil."

Again, the human tendency to consign those who do not agree with us to future punishment if we do not see the possibility of damaging them here—and even the Apostles John and James wanted to call down fire from heaven on some opposition preachers[1]—is very much

some pertinent remarks on this subject, where he writes:—"One of the standing accusations of the Church against science is that it is materialistic. On this I would like to point out, in passing, that the whole Church conception concerning a future life has always been and still is the purest materialism. It is represented that the material body is to rise again, and inhabit a material heaven."

[1] Christ Himself was not above prophesying woe and perdition for those who rejected Him (St. Matthew, cc. 23, 24, 25).

Even the gentle St. Francis of Assisi gave way to the same

weakened by getting rid of belief in a supernatural hell. This alone seems to me a very great gain in the agnostic position. For any one, who has ever listened to a Christian minister preaching on the subject of hell, enlarging on its horrors and describing, almost with relish, the fate of those who will find a place there, will realise what a stumbling-block this belief has been to the development of a genuine religious spirit capable of uniting mankind.

While on this subject, let me add that the agnostic maintains that neglect of opportunity and self-indulgence in spite of knowledge bring their own reward, so that it is quite unnecessary to consign any one to hell, even if the thought or sight of any one filled with remorse does not tend to awaken pity rather than satisfaction. Thus I have come across more than one human being who might be said to be already in hell, judging from the degree of their mental suffering, just as I have known a few individuals possessing minds filled with heavenly calm owing to a pure conscience. In short heaven and hell certainly exist, but it is here on earth.

4. The agnostic in relying on reason is essentially humble; for he must always be ready to admit he is wrong, if his reasons for any action or belief are shown to be invalid. At the same time, he has the satisfaction of feeling that he is in the van of progress and on the right path for ameliorating conditions underlying unhappiness. There is a confidence about the agnostic's humility which is very striking when compared with the hesitation of the modern Churchman's outlook into the future, considering

weakness when he saw a tendency in his friars to depart from his rule of poverty, humility and ignorance. Here is part of a prayer:—"Oh! may they be accursed by Thee, Lord, and by all the court of heaven, and by me their unworthy servant, they who by their bad example overturn and destroy all that Thou didst do in the beginning and ceasest not to do by the holy Brothers of the Order." Paul Sabatier comments on this as follows:—"This passage from Thomas of Celano, the most moderate of his biographers, shows to what a pitch of vehemence and indignation the gentle Francis could be worked up." (*Loc. cit.*, p. 276.)

the confident claims to a divine mission made by the various Christian Churches in the past.[1]

5. The agnostic is less liable to "spiritual" worry, for he is saved by his reason from trying to understand what is unknowable. As I have before said, there are many mysteries which the agnostic does not profess to be able to explain; especially the Creation of the Universe and the Nature of God. For belief in an Act of Creation and in the directing Intelligence of a Personal God[2] is chiefly held on the analogy of our own powers

[1] For instance in "Methods and Results in Modern Theology," (prefatory essay to vol. xxxiii. of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Ed. X.), the Rev. W. E. Collins writes:—"It must of course be remembered, however, that this tendency towards agreement as to the genuineness of the New Testament records does not necessarily indicate acceptance of the traditional faith; quite the reverse. It rather indicates, as was stated above, that theological inquiry has come to a natural end in one respect and has taken a fresh direction. . . . That this tendency is at variance with the tendency which has been dominant in theology during recent years is indisputable; and as little can it be doubted that it is at the present time very strong. There are not a few things which tend in the same direction. There is a widespread feeling of hesitation as to the Virgin Birth of our Lord, based not so much on any intellectual difficulty as to Incarnation itself as upon the scientific difficulty of conceiving of such a breach of the order of Nature. There are difficulties as to the Gospel miracles, as to the nature of Christ's offering for sin and the like."

[2] Illingworth, in his book entitled "Personality, Human and Divine," bases his argument for the Divinity of Christ and the existence of a personal God on these lines and on the supposed proof of absolute will-power as given by the metaphysician Lotze.

I have purposely, as far as possible, avoided using the expression "free-will" in this book, as different people attach such different meanings to it. The operation of so-called will-power is of course a daily fact; but nevertheless there is much more to be said against the existence of absolute free-will than for it. H. G. Wells' remarks on the subject in "First and Last Things" are very sensible, where he summarises his own view by saying:—"And now let me return to a point raised in the first book in § 9. Is the whole of this scheme of things settled and done? The whole trend of science is to that belief. On the scientific plane one is a fatalist, the universe a system of inevitable consequences. But as I show in that section referred to, it is quite

of manufacture, and it is probable that our minds are incapable of comprehending the true relationships which exist in the universe. Thus on another analogy, just as a beetle which is squashed flat by a man walking along a road, does not realise the nature of human beings and the force which kills it, so man, in the presence of natural catastrophes caused by lightning, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, etc., is apt to realise how incapable he is of comprehending the ultimate nature of the origin of the forces which surround him.

Also, by not assigning an absolute value to the voice of conscience and by realising the intellectual element in that voice, the agnostic is saved from being led by his conscience into worrying, irrational situations.

I have now sufficiently indicated the advantages of the agnostic position; but, as regards the practical details of agnostic teaching, it is difficult to be as positive as the reader probably would wish. In fact, it is in some ways the time for saying as little as possible, since we live in a difficult transitional time between the age of superstitious Christianity and that of Rational Altruism, and there is still great need for discussion and experimenting how best to carry out agnostic ideals in detail. But I have tried not only to indicate what should be the fruits of an agnostic religious system, but also to point out the reasonable roots on which it grows. I have heard the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge say, in a lecture dealing with researches like Tylor's "Primitive Culture," and Fraser's "Golden Bough," that perhaps the roots of Christianity spring from magic and tapu-worship, but that after all the fruits alone are the

possible to accept as true in their several planes both predestination and free-will. If you ask me, I think I should say I incline to believe in predestination and do quite completely believe in freewill. . . . One or two Pragmatists, so far as I can understand them, do not hold this view of predestination at all, but as a provisional assumption it underlies most scientific work."

The best discussion of the question of moral responsibility and free-will that I have come across occurs in an essay, by Professor Tyndall, entitled "Science and Man."

important point.[1] But, even so, the fruits borne by a tree depend on its roots, and so I maintain that any religious system rooted in and still flourishing on superstition cannot be thoroughly sound, as exemplified by the mixed character of the fruits borne by various branches of the Christian Church. Yet let no one mistake my meaning. For I do not at all desire the growth of an entirely new religious system, if it be possible to reform the present Christian religion by pruning its superstitious roots and by grafting on to it agnostic humility and love of truth. For, in the words of H. G. Wells, "The idea of the Catholic Church is charged with synthetic suggestion."[2]

This, then, is the end of my remarks on the nature of agnostic ideals which many may object to my calling the "Gospel of Common-Sense." But whether what I have written finds acceptance with the reader or no, I am sure that hardly anyone will object to my summarising this chapter by saying that the Gospel of Common-Sense, addressed to every human being, but essentially to youth, is, *Live a life worthy of your mind, remembering that the possession of a highly developed human brain brings responsibilities and gives opportunities which are not open to animals; and let adherence to duty be your guiding motive in life.* Therefore I can appropriately close this book on The Evidence for the Supernatural with Emerson's stimulating lines :—

So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When Duty whispers low, Thou must,
The youth replies, I can!

[1] W. R. Inge, D.D., now Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral.
[2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 154.

APPENDIX A

HUXLEY, with his usual perspicacity, recognised the presence of faith as an element in all our beliefs and defined its province in the following words:—" It is quite true that the ground of every one of our actions, and the validity of all our reasonings, rest upon the great act of faith, which leads us to take the experience of the past as a safe guide in our dealings with the present and future. From the nature of ratiocination, it is obvious that the axioms, on which it is based, cannot be demonstrated by ratiocination. It is also a trite observation, that, in the business of life, we constantly take the most serious action upon evidence of an utterly insufficient character. But it is surely plain that faith is not necessarily entitled to dispense with ratiocination, because ratiocination cannot dispense with faith as a starting-point; and, that because we are often obliged by the pressure of events to act on very bad evidence, it does not follow that it is proper to act on such evidence when the pressure is absent.

" The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that ' faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen.' In the Authorised Version ' substance ' stands for ' assurance,' and ' evidence ' for ' proving.' The question of the exact meaning of the two words ὑπόστασις and ἔλεγχος, affords a fine field of discussion for the scholar and the metaphysician. But I fancy we shall not be far from the mark if we take the writer to have had in his mind the profound psychological truth, that men constantly feel certain about things for which they strongly hope, but have no evidence, in the legal or logical sense of the word; and he calls this feeling ' faith.' I may have the most absolute faith that a friend has not committed the crime of which he is accused. In the early days of English history, if my friend could have obtained a few more compurgators of a like robust faith, he would have been acquitted. At the present day, if I tendered myself as a witness on that score, the judge would tell me to stand down, and the youngest barrister would smile at my simplicity. Miserable indeed is the man who has not such faith in some of his fellowmen, only less miserable than the man who allows himself to forget that such faith is not, strictly speaking, evidence, and when his faith is disappointed, as will happen

now and again, turns Timon and blames the universe for his own blunders. And so, if a man can find a friend, the hypostasis of all his hopes, the mirror of his ethical ideal, in the Jesus of any or all of the Gospels, let him live by faith in that ideal. Who shall or can forbid him ? But let him not delude himself with the notion that his faith is evidence of the objective reality of that in which he trusts. Such evidence is to be obtained only by the use of the methods of science, as applied to history and to literature, and it amounts at present to very little." (" Agnosticism," vol. v., pp. 243-245.)

APPENDIX B

FROM *The Times Weekly Edition, Supplement,* June 25th, 1909
ON THE SUBJECT OF " SPIRIT " PHOTOGRAPHY

THE photographic world has once more had its attention drawn to the claims of what is called " spirit " photography; and a committee has been formed, under the auspices of the *Daily Mail,* which has been investigating the subject, with the inevitable result. Three spiritualists and three expert photographers formed the committee. The three spiritualists reported that the photographers were not in a proper frame of mind to succeed in obtaining " spirit " photographs. The photographers announced that no scrap of evidence was put before them to show that " spirit " photography was possible. But they went further, and herein lies the feature of this particular investigation. They invited the submission to them of " spirit " photographs, and, having examined these critically, they report that not only did they not testify to their supernatural production, but that they bore on the face of them circumstantial evidence of the way in which they had been produced; in other words, that the prints were not mysteries, but self-revealed " fakes."

Those who are not photographers may well wonder how so very definite a pronouncement can be made. A recent case will show how photographs can be made to tell a good deal more than is to be seen by a mere glance at them.

Let us imagine a man in a frock coat, buttoned over towards the right, as is customary with frock coats, and with one of his hands thrust into the breast after the manner of the first Napoleon. Let us imagine him next with the same coat on, but buttoned over to the left, with the other hand thrust into it. Imagine any one set the task of photographing him in these two positions, so that every crease, every fold, every thread in the texture of the coat,

every hair on his head (the parting shifted over automatically also), every minute detail in the one photograph shall be the exact counterpart of every minute detail in the other. No human power could do such a thing, though, no doubt, a very close resemblance might be got.

If two such photographs were shown to a photographer, he would say that beyond all doubt they must have been made from the same negative, the only difference being that one was reversed, right for left, in the process, as may easily be done by photography. Now, there have been "spirit" photographs in which the "spirit" appeared in such a frock coat, and in two of them, although the "material" part of the picture was different, the "spirit" was alike in both exactly as already described. A difference of the hundredth part of an inch in any detail of the "spirit" would have been manifest directly the two negatives were put film to film; but the registration was exact. Yet one purported on the face of it to be a view of a "spirit" with his right hand thrust into his coat, and the other another view of the same spirit, but this time with his left hand in that position.

The explanation of the trick, for it is nothing else, is absurdly simple. If in taking a portrait we can introduce inside the dark-slide which holds the plate, and just in front of the plate, a positive on glass or film of the "spirit" form, the light which reaches the plate when the lens is uncapped, strikes through that positive and prints a negative of it on the plate at the same time that it prints a negative of the real sitter. As dark-slides are usually made as thin as possible, it is more convenient to have that positive on a thin celluloid film instead of on glass, and if it is put in one case with the one side, and in the other with the other, turned towards the plate, we shall get a right-handed "spirit" in one, and a left-handed "spirit" in the other, with all the details in each exactly agreeing. It is the easiest thing in the world to arrange a dark-slide which will look perfectly innocent and yet have the positive within it, so that it will give a "spirit," either on every plate, or on some, at the will of the photographer.

The ordinary precautions which are said to be taken against trickery in such a case are no protection at all. The plates are bought in the ordinary way, initialled to make sure that the plates so bought are those that are exposed, and whoever makes the test may see them put into the slide and exposed, and may take them out and develop them. Yet the "spirit" forms appear.

It might be thought strange that the mistake of putting the same spirit on two plates, one the right way round, and the other reversed, would not have been guarded against, since it at once gives a clue as to the way in which the thing has been done. But no inconsistencies of this kind seem to have the slightest effect

upon believers, and many "spirit" photographs which are accepted without question by those who like such things are far cruder in the way in which they reveal their origin.

For instance, when a plate is exposed in a camera, it is held in position either against a wooden rebate all round the dark slide, or by catches or pins. If the slide has a rebate, it has no catches or pins, and vice versa; in fact, the two methods are quite distinct, and indicate dark slides of an entirely different pattern. The plate is put in from the front when it is held by catches, from the back when it is held by a rebate. Whatever the method, it leaves its mark upon the negative, and the photographer to whom it was shown would have no difficulty in deciding at once whether one method or the other had been used. Yet some of the spirit negatives which are accepted as bearing "super-normal" figures upon them actually bear the plainest indications on their margins that the one exposure has been made in both forms of slide. The edges of the plates are marked both by a rebate and by catches. It does not follow that the plate itself has been exposed twice; it merely indicates that it has acquired the extra marks from the positive of the spirit, the spirit form having been photographed originally in a dark slide of a different pattern. It might be supposed that the very slight precautions which would suffice to obliterate one set of marks would have been taken in common prudence; but, so confident are those who produce such things in the credulity of their customers, that no trouble on such a score seems to be required. In the same way, marks which are incontestable evidence to a photographer that these pictures are due to some form of double printing, such as has been described above, are often left on; a "spirit" has even had its picture cut up into little squares or dots by the action of a half-tone screen, showing that it was a copy of some "process" illustration. Yet it has been accepted as genuine.

There are other very significant features in these "spirit" photographs. While the sitter or medium is photographed direct upon the plate, the "spirit," as already shown, is put on by a more round-about process. It is first photographed, and a negative is obtained in the usual way. A positive on glass or film is made from this, and this is used to print a "negative" picture on the plate as described above. Each one of these operations involves a certain loss of quality, or, as the photographer calls it, a degradation of tone. It is this which enables any one of experience to tell at once whether a photograph was taken from life or was copied from another photograph. Now, almost without exception in these "spirit" photographs, while the material sitter is shown as would be expected when photographed directly, the "spirit" picture has the degradation which indicates that it is a copy and not taken direct, as it purports to

be. In many cases, too, the material sitter is lit from the right, the "spirit" lit from the left. There have been stereoscopic pictures in which, although the material sitter showed the stereoscopic relief, the "spirit" form showed no relief, but appeared simply as a flat surface, though the folds of its garments cast shadows.

There is no need to go further into these things. A whole chain of detailed circumstantial evidence is carried upon the face of these photographs, which those who accept them have to explain, before they have any basis for demanding an experimental test of their supernatural productions.

APPENDIX C

The Rev. William Stainton Moses

Quotation from "Modern Spiritualism" showing how easy it was for him to escape detection, and how much evidence there is that he produced his phenomena by trickery :—

"From this brief sketch of the physical manifestations it will be clear that the mediumship of Stainton Moses in this aspect, at all events, added nothing to the evidence for Spiritualism. If we leave out of the account for the moment the difficulties involved in the supposition that a man of his character and antecedents should lend himself to trickery, there is nothing in the manifestations produced in his presence to suggest any other explanation. All that was done has been done again and again by fraudulent mediums and naughty children, and done under conditions much less favourable. Stainton Moses had the advantage of darkness more complete than that afforded to most mediums. For the greater part of the long period under review his only sitters were two old friends, to whom the bare suspicion of dishonesty on the part of their tried and trusted fellow-worker, the man whom they had selected to be the tutor of their son, would have seemed a monstrous thing. No tests of any kind were imposed, and the controlling spirit, speaking through the mouth of the medium, sternly repressed any attempt in that direction. The introduction of strangers was also discouraged; and, though a few favoured persons were admitted later, their presence seemed to exercise an injurious influence over the physical manifestations, so that the phenomena were often limited to elevating discourse from "Imperator."

It was hardly to be expected that in a circle constituted as described actual proofs of fraud should come to light. But it is

noteworthy that even in the records written by the Speer family, under the influence of a strong prepossession in favour of the medium, there are many suspicious circumstances. Thus, Dr. Speer records that on one occasion, stretching out his hand in the dark, he encountered another hand in the middle of the table, where no hand should have been, the medium ostensibly sitting at some distance from the table. The spirit lights are described as hard, round, and cold to the touch, a description consistent with the supposition that they consisted of round bottles of phosphorised oil. At some of the early séances Dr. and Mrs. Speer were requested to rub their hands together quickly when the lights appeared, in order to generate power—a device which might naturally suggest itself to a trickster as a convenient means of checking the impulses of unseasonable curiosity. It is to be noted, further, that hands, and occasionally a forearm, were seen holding the lights. Again, in a passage to which my attention was directed by Dr. Hodgson, we have the record—by the medium himself—of what appears to have been a miscarriage to the bottle of phosphorised oil. After describing the appearance of several large lights, Mr. Moses writes: "Suddenly there arose from below me, apparently under the table, or near the floor, right under my nose, a cloud of luminous smoke, just like phosphorus. It fumed up in great clouds, until I seemed to be on fire, and rushed from the room in a panic. I was fairly frightened, and could not tell what was happening. I rushed to the door and opened it, and so to the front door. My hands seemed to be ablaze and left their impress on the door and handles. It blazed for a while after I had touched it, but soon went out, and no smell or trace remained. . . . There seemed to be no end of smoke. It smelt distinctly phosphoric, but the smell evaporated as soon as I got out of the room into the air."

Again, note this significant episode, recorded by Mr. Charlton Speer as one of the most satisfactory "test" incidents in his experience: "We were sitting one night as usual, and I had in front of me, with my hand resting upon it, a piece of notepaper with a pencil close by. Suddenly Stainton Moses, who was sitting exactly opposite to me, exclaimed, 'There is a very bright column of light behind you.' Soon afterwards he said that the column of light had developed into a spirit form. I asked him if the face was familiar to him, and he replied in the negative, at the same time describing the head and features. When the séance was concluded, I examined my sheet of paper, which my hand had never left, and found written on it a message and the signature." It is perhaps fair to assume that when Mr. Speers' attention was thus directed to what was going on behind his back, he, momentarily at least, diverted his attention from the paper on which his hand rested." (Vol. ii., pp. 280-282.)

APPENDIX D

ACCOUNT OF A SEANCE AT HACKNEY BY SIR W. CROOKES, F.R.S.

"I PASS on to a séance held last night at Hackney. Katie never appeared to greater perfection, and for nearly two hours she walked about the room, conversing familiarly with those present. On several occasions she took my arm when walking, and the impression conveyed to my mind that it was a living woman by my side, instead of a visitor from the other world was so strong that the temptation to repeat a certain celebrated experiment became almost irresistible." (This refers to an occasion on which a sitter had embraced a "spirit.") "Feeling, however, that if I had not a spirit, I had at all events a lady close to me, I asked her permission to clasp her in my arms, so as to be able to verify the interesting observations which a bold experimentalist has recently somewhat verbosely recorded. Permission was graciously given, and I accordingly did—well, as any gentleman would do under the circumstances.

"Mr. Volckman will be pleased to know that I can corroborate his statement that the 'ghost' (not 'struggling,' however) was as material a being as Miss Cook herself. But the sequel shows how wrong it is for an experimentalist, however accurate his observations may be, to venture to draw an important conclusion from an insufficient amount of evidence.

"Katie now said she thought she should be able this time to show herself and Miss Cook together. I was to turn the gas out, and then come with my phosphorus lamp into the room now used as a cabinet. This I did, having previously asked a friend, who was skilful at shorthand, to take down any statement I might make when in the cabinet, knowing the importance attaching to first impressions, and not wishing to leave more to memory than necessary. His notes are now before me.

"I went cautiously into the room, it being dark, and felt about for Miss Cook. I found her crouching on the floor. Kneeling down, I let air into the lamp, and by its light I saw the young lady, dressed in black velvet, as she had been in the early part of the evening, and to all appearance perfectly senseless. She did not move when I took her hand and held the light close to her face, but continued quietly breathing.

"Raising the lamp, I looked around and saw Katie standing close behind Miss Cook. She was robed in flowing white drapery, as we had seen her previously during the séance. Holding one of Miss Cook's hands in mine, and still kneeling, I passed the lamp up and down, so as to illuminate Katie's whole figure, and satisfy myself thoroughly that I was really looking at the veritable

Katie whom I had clasped in my arms a few minutes before, and not at the phantom of a disordered brain. She did not speak, but moved her head and smiled in recognition. Three separate times did I carefully examine Miss Cook crouching before me, to be sure that the hand I held was that of a living woman, and three separate times did I turn the lamp to Katie and examine her with steadfast scrutiny, until I had no doubt whatever of her objective reality. At last Miss Cook moved slightly, and Katie instantly motioned me to go away. I went to another part of the cabinet and then ceased to see Katie, but did not leave the room till Miss Cook woke up, and two of the visitors came in with a light." (*Spiritualist*, April 3rd, 1874.)

APPENDIX E

On the Need of a Conjurer's Training for undertaking Psychical Research

(Quotation from "Modern Spiritualism," Bk. IV., ch. ii.)

"It is hardly necessary to point the obvious moral. In the last chapter we learnt something of the treachery that lies in the dark séance, and the blind guidance of the sense of touch. From the present study we may gather indications of the less obvious, and, to many persons, still incredible shortcomings of the most trusted and least trustworthy of our senses. The untrained eye is no match for the trained hand of the conjurer. The kind of observation demanded of the investigators at a spiritualistic séance—an observation which is alive to the various artifices employed to distract it, and which, if not actually unremitting, is at least aware of its own lapses—is a quality not called for and not exercised in the investigations of the physical laboratory, and not to be acquired even to a moderate extent, except by education of a very special kind. As we have seen, even professional conjurers may prove deficient in this special qualification. The labours of Mr. Davey and Dr. Hodgson should compel us to admit that no evidence for the so-called "physical" phenomena of Spiritualism can be regarded as satisfactory, which at any point depends upon continuous observation on the part of the investigator" (pp. 221, 222).

The above paragraph comes after a passage containing a practical illustration of the need of a conjurer's training for undertaking psychical research. For the author of "Modern Spiritualism" describes what he saw, when Mr. S. J. Davey produced some spirit-writing on a double-hinged slate, which Mr. A. Podmore had locked before pocketing the key:—

"Throughout the séance Davey kept up a constant stream of chatter on matters more or less germane to the business in hand. Mr. A. Podmore, absorbed by the conjurer's patter, fixed his eyes on Davey's face, and the latter took advantage of the opportunity to remove the locked slate under cover of a duster from under my brother's nose to the far end of the room, and there exchange it for a similar slate, with a previously prepared message, which was then placed by means of the same manœuvre with the duster in the position originally occupied by the first slate. Then, and only then, the stream of talk slackened, and Mr. A. Podmore's attention became concentrated upon the slate, from which the sound of spirit writing was now heard to proceed. To me the most surprising thing in the whole episode was Mr. A. Podmore's incredulity, when told that his attention had been diverted from the slate for an appreciable period." (*Loc. cit.*, vol. ii., p 218.)

APPENDIX F

Extract from the Prolegomena to G. H. Lewes's "History of Philosophy" (§§ 22 and 23)

On the Subject of Spirit-Rapping

"(§ 22.) Our second illustration shall be taken from the instructive though deplorable hypothesis of spirit-rapping, which is an indelible disgrace to the education of our age.

"A few persons stand round a table, gently resting their hands on it, but careful not to push in any direction. In a little while the table moves, at first slowly, afterwards with growing velocity. The persons are all of the highest respectability, above suspicion of wilful deceit. The phenomenon is so unexpected, so unprecedented, that an explanation is imperiously demanded. In presence of unusual phenomena, men are unable to remain without some explanation which shall render intelligible to them how the unusual event is produced. They are spectators merely; condemned to witness the event, unable to penetrate directly into its causes, unable to get behind the scenes and see the strings which move the puppets, they guess at what they cannot see. Man is *interpres Naturæ*. Whether he be metaphysician or man of science, his starting-point is the same; and they are in error who say that the metaphysician differs from the man of science in drawing his explanation from the recesses of his own mind in lieu of drawing it from the observation of facts. Both observe facts, and both draw their interpretations from their own minds. Nay, as we have seen, there is necessarily, even in the most

familiar fact, the annexation of mental inference, some formal element added by the mind, suggested by, but not given in, the immediate observation. Facts are the registration of direct observation and direct inference, congeries of particulars partly sensational, partly ideal. The scientific value of facts depends on the validity of the inferences bound up with them; and hence the profound truth of Cullen's paradox that there are more false facts than false theories current.

"The facts comprised in the phenomenon of 'Table-turning' are by no means so simple as they have been represented. Let us, however, reserve all criticism, and fix our attention solely on the phenomenon, which, expressed in rigorous terms, amounts to this: the table turns, the cause of its turning is unknown. To explain this, one class of metaphysical minds refers it to the agency of an unseen spirit. Connecting the spiritual manifestation with others which have been narrated to him, the interpreter finds no difficulty in believing that a spirit moved the table; for 'the movement assuredly issued from no human agency;' the respectable witnesses 'declared they did not push.' Unless the table moved itself, therefore, his conclusion must be that it was moved by a spirit.

"Minds of another class give another explanation, one equally metaphysical, although its advocates scornfully reject the spiritual hypothesis. These minds are indisposed to admit the existence of spirits as agents in natural phenomena; but their interpretation, in spite of its employing the language of Science, is as utterly removed from scientific method as the spiritual interpretation they despise; they attribute the phenomenon to electricity. Connecting this supposed electrical manifestation with some other facts, which seem to warrant the belief of nervous action being identical with electricity, they have no hesitation in affirming that electricity streams from the tips of the fingers. It is even suggested by one gentleman that 'the nervous fluid has probably a rotatory action, and a power of throwing off some of its surplus force.' How entirely these ideas of nervous fluid, rotatory power, and surplus force are additions drawn from the imagination and not supplied in the objects, I need scarcely pause to point out.

"Each of these explanations has been widely accepted by the general public. The obvious defect in both lies in the utter absence of any objective guarantee. We ought to be satisfied with no explanation which is without its valid guarantee. Before we purchase silver spoons we demand to see the mark of Silversmiths' Hall, to be assured that the spoons are silver, and not plated only. The test of the assayer dispels our misgivings. In like manner, when the motion of a table is explained by spiritual agency, instead of debating whether the spirit 'brings airs from

heaven or blasts from hell,' we let our scepticism fall on the preliminary assumption of the spirit's presence. Prove the presence of the spirit before you ask us to go further. If present, the spirit is perhaps capable of producing this motion of the table; we do not know whether it is, for we know nothing about spirits; at any rate, the primary point requiring proof is the presence of the spirit. We cannot permit you to assume such a presence merely to explain such a movement; for if the fact to be explained is sufficient proof of the explanation, we might with equal justice assume that the movement was caused by an invisible dragon who turned the table by the fanning of his awful wings. If it is permissible to draw material from the subject, and to make such assumption valid as regards objects, our right to assume the dragon is on a par with our right to assume the spirit.

"A similar initial error is observable in the electrical hypothesis. Electricity may be a less intrinsically improbable assumption, but its presence requires proof. After that step had been taken, we should require proof that electricity could comport itself with reference to tables and similar bodies in this particular manner. We have various tests for the presence of electricity, various means of ascertaining how it would 'act upon a table.' But seeing that the gentleman who spoke so confidently of 'currents issuing from the tips of the fingers' never once attempted to prove that there were currents; and knowing, moreover, that these currents, if present, would not make a table turn, all men of true scientific culture dismissed the explanation with contempt.

"Such were the metaphysical explanations of the phenomenon. They are vitiated by their method. Very different was that pursued by men of science. The object sought was the unknown cause of the table's movements. To reach the unknown we must pass by the Objective Method through the avenues of the known; we must not attempt to reach it through the unknown. Is there any known fact with which this movement can be allied? The first and most obvious suggestion was that the table was pushed by the hands which rested on it. There is a difficulty in the way of this explanation, namely, 'that the persons declare solemnly they did not push; and, as persons of the highest respectability, we are bound to believe them.' Is this statement of any value? The whole question is involved in it. But the philosophical mind is very little affected by guarantees of respectability in matters implicating sagacity rather than integrity. The Frenchman assured his friend that the earth did turn round the sun, and offered his *parole d'honneur* as a guarantee; but in the delicate and difficult question of science *paroles d'honneur* have a quite inappreciable weight. We may, therefore, set aside the respectability of the witnesses, and, with full confidence in their integrity, estimate the real value of their assertion, which amounts to this:

they were not conscious of pushing. If we come to examine such a case, we find physiology in possession of abundant examples of muscular action unaccompanied by distinct consciousness; and some of these examples are very similar to those of the unconscious pushing, which may have turned the table, and we are thus satisfied of three important points: 1. Pushing is an adequate cause, and will serve as well as either the supposed spirit or electricity to explain the movement of the table. 2. Pushing may take place without any distinct consciousness on the part of those who push. 3. Expectant attention is known to produce such a state of the muscles as would produce this unconscious pushing.

"Considered therefore as a mere hypothesis, this of unconscious pushing is strictly scientific; it may not be true, but it has fulfilled the preliminary conditions. Unlike the two hypotheses it opposes, it assumes nothing previously unknown, or not easily demonstrable; every position has been or may be verified; whereas the metaphysicians have not verified one of their positions, they have not proved the presence of their agents, nor have they proved that these agents, if present, would act in the required manner. Of spirit we know nothing, consequently can predicate nothing. Of electricity we know something, but what is known is not in accordance with the table-turning hypothesis. Of pushing we know that it can and does turn tables. All then that is required to convert this latter hypothesis into scientific certainty is to prove the presence of the pushing in this particular case. And it is proved in many ways, positive and negative, as I showed when the phenomenon first became the subject of public investigation. Positive, because if the hands rest on a loose tablecloth, or on substances with perfectly smooth surfaces, which will glide easily over the table, the cloth or the substances will move, and not the table. Negative, because if the persons are duly warned of their liability to unconscious pushing, and are told to keep vigilant guard over their sensations, they do not move the table, although previously they have moved it frequently. When we have thus verified the presence of unconscious pushing, all the links in the chain have been verified, and certainty is complete.

"(§ 23.) Reviewing the three explanations which the phenomenon of table-turning called forth, we elicit one characteristic as distinguishing the scientific or Objective Method, namely, the verification of each stage in the process, the guarantee of each separate point, the cultivated caution of proceeding to the unknown solely through the avenues of the known."

APPENDIX G

Mr. Maskelyne, Mr. Fay, and the Davenport Brothers

In the June number of the *Strand Magazine*, 1910, Sir Hiram Maxim described some performances seen by him in America in early life, the essence of which consisted in the success with which the performer, a Mr. Fay, liberated himself in an apparently inexplicable way. For he was scientifically bound with a rope, the ends of which were knotted and sealed. It should, however, be remarked that the performer was concealed in a closed cabinet. Sir H. Maxim asserted that nothing he had seen Mr. Maskelyne perform could be compared for wonderfulness to the phenomena produced by Mr. Fay. To this Mr. Maskelyne replied in the August number, asserting that he had in earlier life produced phenomena by trickery quite as wonderful; but that these tricks required suppleness and training, and besides were getting stale after being performed for ten years, so that he had given up doing them since 1875, a date before Sir H. Maxim came to England. As a description of the type of trick he performed, Mr. Maskelyne gave a cutting from the *Birmingham Gazette*, June 24, 1865, which certainly justifies Mr. Maskelyne in contending that his tricks were quite as wonderful as those described by Sir H. Maxim, and runs as follows: "The Davenports Outdone.—On Monday evening an opportunity was offered of witnessing, in Jessops' Gardens, the tricks—for so they are described—as performed by Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke. A plain and simply constructed cabinet was placed upon a platform, in which the performers were securely tied by two gentlemen from the audience. Immediately upon the doors of the cabinet being closed bells began to ring, tambourines were played, and musical instruments pitched through the aperture. In less than a minute after the doors were closed, they were thrown open again from the inside, and the operators were found to be as firmly and securely tied as in the first instance. The musical instruments were replaced in the cabinet, the doors again closed, and in a few seconds the bells rang more violently than ever, the tambourine appeared to be more eccentric in its movements, and naked hands were thrust through the aperture. The doors were again thrown open as before, and the two performers were found sitting calmly at either end of the cabinet, bound hands and feet. A gentleman from the audience then ascended the platform; was blindfolded, placed upon a seat in the cabinet, and his hands firmly tied to the knees of each of the operators. As soon as the doors were closed, the bells, tambourine and trumpet commenced their

discordant discourse, and came forth from the cabinet aperture as if released from a temporary Bedlam.

"The doors again voluntarily opened, and the blind-folded gentleman was seen to be seated as when he first entered the cabinet, only that the tambourine was upon his head instead of being upon his knee.

"The succeeding trick, however, appeared to be far more marvellous than any which preceded it. Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke remained bound as before; the cords were sealed, and flour placed in their hands. In this condition they were again locked in the cabinet, two cornets being placed in the centre seat. Immediately upon the doors being closed a duet was commenced upon the cornets, "Home, Sweet Home" being the air selected for the purpose. It was well played, and would have called forth plaudits under ordinary circumstances, but in this case the applause was immense. Upon the last strain of the duet dying away, the doors were flung open, the cornets remained passive upon the seat, where they had been originally placed, and the operators sat as calmly and collectedly as if nothing had occurred.

"The ropes were inspected, and it was announced that the seals had not been broken, nor had any of the flour been spilled. The doors were again closed, and in about four minutes the young men emerged from the cabinet, perfectly unfettered, with the flour still in their hands!

"But the most astonishing part of the programme had yet to be accomplished. Mr. Maskelyne announced that he would be locked in a box three feet long by two feet wide and eighteen inches in depth, that the box should be corded according to the fancy of any one present, and still he would escape.

"An ordinary looking deal box of the dimensions stated, with a few holes drilled in at either end, was placed in the cabinet, and in this box Mr. Maskelyne voluntarily immured himself. The box was locked, and the key given to a gentleman called from the audience, who corded up the box, an operation which occupied fully six minutes. This having been done to his satisfaction, bells were placed upon the box and the doors of the cabinet were closed, but the click of the bolt had scarcely died away ere the bells began to be tremulous, and gradually increased to a clatter, till at length they were pitched through the aperture on to the platform, and in less than ten minutes from the closing of the doors they were again thrown open, and Mr. Maskelyne was seen coolly seated in the box, and smilingly bowing his acknowledgments of the applause with which he was greeted. This is a trick which the Davenports never attempted, and, (as Barnum somewhere has it,) 'It must be seen to be believed.' Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke were then bound by Mr. E. Lawrence and Mr. Dallow—the first-

named being, we believe, one of the gentlemen whose knot-tying somewhat perplexed the Brothers Davenport during their visit here—an operation which lasted nearly twenty minutes, but the exhibitors managed to free themselves from their bonds in about fifteen minutes. Mr. Lawrence then explained to the audience that he had seen the Brothers Davenport tied, and had indeed assisted in that operation, but he would venture to assert that those worthies were not tied nearly so securely as their rivals had been. The performance throughout was loudly applauded and gave the greatest satisfaction."

APPENDIX H

COLLEY V. MASKELYNE [*April*, 1907]

THOMAS COLLEY was Rector of Stockton, Warwickshire, at the time of the trial. As a youth he went to Magdalen College, Oxford, but never took a degree owing to want of means. Subsequently he became an M.A. of Tennessee. He was ordained in 1869 and became a priest in 1871. It was in 1874 that he became a great friend of an American medium, named Monck. Soon after this, he sailed as chaplain in H.M.S. *Malabar*, and was in India in 1876, when Monck was sentenced to three months' imprisonment as a rogue and vagabond. On his return, he resumed his intimacy with Monck in the year 1877, and in February, 1878, took place the séance, in the course of which Mr. Colley saw phenomena that Maskelyne professed subsequently to be able to imitate. He was nominated Archdeacon of Pieter Maritzburg by Bishop Colenso in 1879, and though Colenso died in 1883, he did not leave Natal till 1888, when he ceased to be Archdeacon. He had always taken an interest in psychical subjects, and it occurred to him to go to the Church Congress at Weymouth in 1905 and invite criticism as to some of the incidents he had seen in Monck's rooms at Bloomsbury years before. No notice was taken of his suggestion, so he delivered his lecture during the week of the Church Congress and proceeded to have it printed by the thousand and to distribute it as "A Lecture by the Ven. Archdeacon Colley, given at Weymouth during the week of the Church Congress."

The title of the pamphlet was "Phenomena, Bewildering, Psychological." Its publication led to correspondence in the *Daily Telegraph*, which included a letter from Mr. Maskelyne on April 17th, 1906. Archdeacon Colley replied in a private letter enclosing a challenge offering to pay £1000 for a replica at

Stockton Rectory of Monck's performance. On April 23rd, 1906, Maskelyne replied, saying that he was willing any time to give a replica at St. George's Hall, but that at Stockton Rectory it was too much trouble. Then, on May 29th, Colley wrote as follows :— "£1000 Challenge, by Archdeacon Colley (Dio. Natal), Rector of Stockton, Warwickshire, for Mr. Maskelyne to do in any way, anywhere, at any time, as a conjurer, what the St. George's Hall illusionist declares Dr. Monck did by trickery."

On October 1st, 1906, Maskelyne wrote, saying that on the following Monday he should produce " the illusory effect which you have challenged me to produce, and I shall claim the reward of £1000." Colley went to the performance on October 9th, and denied that Maskelyne had given a replica of Monck's performance. He also resented the statements contained in a pamphlet called " The History of a Thousand Pounds Challenge," which Maskelyne distributed to the audience. In this it was asserted that the Rev. Thomas Colley was not an Archdeacon, and had obtained a nomination for that position under Bishop Colenso by false pretences. This statement formed the basis of the alleged libel, and Maskelyne, for his part, counterclaimed £1000 as the winner of the challenge.

In the course of the trial, it came out that Monck got his title of " Dr." from Philadelphia, that he was the son of a butcher and had for a time been a Baptist Minister. But " Spiritualistic Manifestations " broke out when he was preaching, and the congregation burnt his church for him. Subsequently he practised as a medium, and gave demonstrations at two guineas a time. His repertoire included the usual business with a musical box, spirit hands and other familiar physical phenomena. At a séance in Huddersfield a Mr. H. B. Lodge, an amateur conjurer, was present, who at the conclusion charged Monck with using certain apparatus, and promised him £50 if the musical box and other apparatus was not found upon him. The other credulous sitters begged Monck to submit to be searched, but he rushed at Mr. Lodge, attempted to strike him in the face and then bolted upstairs to his bedroom, where he locked the door and escaped with the aid of sheets from the window. When the door was opened, " the whole bag of tricks " was discovered in the room. For, as Mr. Maskelyne wrote in " The History of a Thousand Pound Challenge," " an examination of Monck's luggage revealed the fact that two large boxes and a full-sized travelling bath were filled with tricky apparatus, including spirit hands, spirit masks, a large quantity of gauzy material, a spirit bird, apparatus for floating tambourines, bells, spirit names, spirit lamps, and a number of most incriminating documents. Mr. Lodge took possession of these articles with the intention of giving public exposures of spiritualism. The police, however, took the matter

out of his hands, and prosecuted Monck. The trial lasted three days, and Monck was sentenced to three months' imprisonment, the maximum penalty.

"What influenced the magistrates in inflicting so severe a punishment were the incriminating documents, which included disgustingly immoral letters from both married and single women, with whom Monck had intrigues under the cloak of spiritualism and the convenience of dark séances. In this respect Monck was but a fair specimen of professional mediums, as a body, both men and women. I have had good reason to know that they are immoral and blasphemous in the extreme, yet spiritualistic cranks would have us believe that the wretches are specially endowed by the Almighty with the power to raise the spirits of the dead and create through their vile bodies living entities of our loved ones who have 'crossed the bar.' The idea is revolting."

In spite of these unfortunate facts about Monck, the Rev. Thomas Colley, in his writings, compared him with St. Paul, and was in no way suspicious about the phenomena he saw him perform. Thus, in the pamphlet above mentioned, Archdeacon Colley wrote: "Once (February 18th, 1878) by daylight it was arranged as a most dangerous experiment that I should grasp the white attired Egyptian and try to keep him from getting back to invisibility through the body of the medium ('Samuel' being in control), and this is what happened, which ever since has made me, when I have read them, ponder over the words of the apostle St. Paul, 'whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth.' (2 Cor. xii., 3). For I was, by an irresistible force, levitated, as it seemed, instantly some eighteen or twenty feet from my drawing-room door right up to where the medium stood, whom strangely and suddenly, wearing white muslin over his black coat, I found in my arms just as I held the 'Mahedi.' The materialised form had gone, and the psychic clothing that had evolved with him from the left side of my friend must also have gone the same way, with the speed of thought back to invisibility through the medium. But whence its substituted draper's stuff now on the body of our friend not wearing it an instant before?"

This quotation formed the subject of the following cross-examination (*The Times*, April 27th, 1907, p. 14):—

Mr. Gill. "You were dragged across the room?"

Arch. Colley. "Not dragged, it was a matter of instant impact. Instead of finding the 'Mahedi' in my arms, as he had been a moment before, I found the medium. I kept for a time a piece of the stuff substituted for the psychic clothing. It was not vulgar draper's stuff, but most delicate silky muslin. I put it in my bag, took it to Leamington, and showed it to my wife; but it disappeared in some mysterious way. After the impact

I collapsed, and the medium collapsed" . . . . The witness then dealt with an incident, when, as he asserted, the "Mahedi," standing some two yards from the medium, chewed a baked apple, which the medium afterwards spat out from his own mouth into a paper bag. The witness produced the baked apple from the paper bag, in which he had kept it ever since (for thirty years), together with a grape skin and a chewed biscuit. He stated that this occurred in full daylight.

Dr. Alfred Wallace, F.R.S., D.C.L., LL.D., was called as a witness for the plaintiff, and said that as long ago as 1862 he began to investigate the phenomena of spiritualism. In 1877 or 1878 he first met Dr. Monck. He never met Mr. Colley till to-day. He met Monck first on the first floor of a small house in Bloomsbury. He had read the plaintiff's pamphlet very carefully. He had himself seen, early in the afternoon, at the house at Bloomsbury, almost identically the same phenomenon as that described by the plaintiff in his pamphlet. (The witness then gave a detailed description of the emanation, conduct, and subsequent absorption of a human form, which, shaping itself out of a white cloud that came out of Monck's side, while he was in a state of trance, grew and gradually disappeared.) He had not known that any other person had seen this, and was very much struck when he read the description in the plaintiff's pamphlet. The witness proceeded, "I am absolutely certain that it could not have been produced by a trick, even if Mr. Maskelyne had been there with all his apparatus." He had been to Mr. Maskelyne's performance to see if he reproduced the phenomena. The exhibition was "perfectly ludicrous." It was a lighted stage, instead of a small room and broad daylight; there was none of the white patch that came out of Monck's side and grew before his eyes, and at the end the young lady walked away instead of being gradually reabsorbed. It was "an absurd travesty," while the other was "a most marvellous sight to see . . ."

Mr. Gill. "Have you ever heard of a medium that was not exposed in the end?"

Dr. Wallace. "On the contrary, I have heard of very few who were exposed. Monck was not caught in the act of trickery. Monck was a guest on the occasion, and a demand was made that he should be searched, and he departed through the window."

APPENDIX I

(I) The Case of Dr. Astley's Astral Body

(From *The Times Weekly Edition*, January 1st, 1909)

A Case for the Psychical Research Society

The following letter, published on Tuesday in *The Times*, has excited much interest.

"Sir,—The following may be considered worthy of record; the circumstances are literally accurate:—

"Last evening, between four and five, the housekeeper here came in and said, 'Come and see Dr. Astley' (the vicar of this parish). 'See Dr. Astley?' I said. 'Yes, Dr. Astley.'

"She took me into the study and asked me to look out of the window. I glanced over the lawn and saw nothing. 'You are looking in the wrong direction; look there.'

"And there I saw the presentment of a clergyman with a Cuddesdon collar gleaming white in the gathering darkness (about 4.40). I turned and looked behind me. 'It must be a reflection of myself,' I said. That, however, was impossible.

"I looked again more carefully. The vision represented a clergyman sitting at a table or desk with books before him. I noticed also a gold chain across his waistcoat (this is how Dr. Astley, the vicar here, wore it). I had three or four views, and then went outside and looked at the supposed wall against which the figure was sitting. It was really an inlet or alcove, and here, the housekeeper said, the vicar used to sit and read in the summer time.

"Dr. Astley is vicar of this parish, and left England for Biskra, Algeria, on December 10th. He and his wife were in the railway accident in a tunnel, reported no doubt by you. I had a letter from the chaplain at Algiers giving details. If you think the above worthy of publication, you may make any use you like of it. I have communicated with no other paper."

"R. Brock, *Acting Vicar.*

"East Rudham Vicarage,
"King's Lynn, *December 27th.*"

It is a curious coincidence perhaps that the apparition should have been observed at this Christmas season, when ghost stories are particularly appropriate. Happily, this is no ghost story in the popular sense, for a telegram from Algiers on Tuesday established beyond doubt that Dr. Astley, the vicar of the parish, was alive, and yet the vision was witnessed again that evening both by Mr. Brock and the housekeeper at the vicarage.

Dr. Astley, who has been vicar of East Rudham since 1896, left England with Mrs. Astley on December 10th for Algiers. Mrs. Astley has not been in good health of late, and Dr. Astley accepted the chaplaincy of Biskra, Algeria, for three months, in the hope that the residence in a warmer climate would be of benefit to her. It was arranged that the Rev. R. Brock, vicar of Criggion, Montgomeryshire, in the diocese of Hereford, should come to East Rudham to act as *locum tenens*. Mr. Brock met Dr. Astley for the first time in London, December 9th, and spent half an hour with him before coming down to Norfolk. He heard nothing more of Dr. Astley until Saturday last, the 26th. On that day he received a letter from the Rev. Herbert C. Muriel, English chaplain at Algiers, announcing that Dr. Astley and his wife had sustained injuries, not of a very serious character apparently, in a railway accident in a tunnel near Mansourah, on the line between Algiers and Biskra. The accident occurred on Wednesday, the 16th, and the chaplain's letter was dated the 20th. The train from Algiers, while in the tunnel, came into collision with a disabled goods train, and, the brake and couplings having given way, the passenger train ran backwards down a steep incline and dashed over an embankment. Dr. and Mrs. Astley, who were in a restaurant car, were buried in the débris, and when they were rescued, it was found that Dr. Astley had received a bad cut on the head and several other contusions, while one of Mrs. Astley's legs was broken, and she had also sustained serious bruises about the face and body. They were taken to the French hospital at Bongie; but the chaplain stated that he was making arrangements for their removal to the English hospital at Algiers, where they would be tended by trained nurses later.

On Saturday, while Mr. Brock was seated in the dining-room at East Rudham Vicarage, the housekeeper summoned him, as he stated in his letter to *The Times*, to " come and see Dr. Astley " in the study. The housekeeper, according to her own story, had gone into the study, which adjoins the dining-room, in order to close the window-shutters. Now, the study is a small room with a door opening on to the lawn. The upper part of the door is of glass, and there is also a large window adjoining the door. On the left of the door outside is a glass conservatory at right angles with it, on the right is a blank wall (part of the dining-room), also at right angles with the study. Mrs. Hartley had no sooner approached the door window than she saw through the glass a figure which she declares was that of Dr. Astley.

The following statements of the three principal actors in this little drama were dictated to our representative on Wednesday afternoon at the Vicarage by the Rev. S. Brock, Mrs. Hartley, and the housemaid, Florence Breeze, respectively.

Statement by Mrs. Hartley

Mrs. Hannah Hartley said :—" I am seventy years of age. I came to the vicarage as housekeeper at the end of July last, or beginning of August. I had been living in Norwich before that time. On Saturday, December 26th, Mr. Brock read to me a letter which he had received from the chaplain at Algiers, describing the injuries which Dr. Astley and Mrs. Astley had sustained in a railway accident. About 4.30 p.m. on that day I went into the study to close the window shutters. As I walked towards the outer door, the upper part of which is of glass, I saw Dr. Astley come round the corner of the house, as though he were going to enter the door, as he often did. He was holding a paper in his hand as though he wanted to give it to me. He was dressed in black, and I saw his white collar distinctly. He was without a hat. I opened the door and was just going to say, ' Fancy you being back,' when he went towards the dining-room wall. There appeared to be a light about the figure, something like a halo. The night was quite dark. I continued to look through the glass, and the figure was there against the wall. He looked at me three or four times. Then I called the girl, Florrie, and, having obtained a candle, we came together into the study. I put the candle on a chair and looked through the window. The figure was there plainer than ever. I placed the girl beside me, and said : ' Tell me what you see, if you see anything.' She said : ' I see the Master, Mr. Astley.' Then I went for Mr. Brock. I put him in position at the window. He could not see anything at first; but on looking sideways towards the wall, said :—' I can see him quite plainly. He has a collar like mine, and a chain across his waistcoat.' Then I looked again and saw that Dr. Astley had changed his position, and was sitting at a desk. He still had the paper in his hand, but was not holding it out to me any longer. I closed the shutters; but as we were leaving the window Mr. Brock said, ' Let us look again, and see if he is still there.' I re-opened the shutters, and the figure was still there in a sitting position. This time he was holding the paper out again. I saw his hand and cuff clearly, and noticed two rings on the hand. Next we got a lantern and went into the garden. There was nothing on the wall, and nobody in the garden. This was about 4.45, so that I saw the doctor for about a quarter of an hour altogether. I returned to the study again and opened the shutter, but nothing was to be seen. I noticed nothing more until Tuesday, the 29th. At 5.15 p.m., when I went to close the shutters, I saw Dr. Astley's figure against the wall in the same position as before, standing with a paper in his hand. He held the paper out to me. I called the girl Florrie, but she could not come. I fetched Mr. Brock into the room and got a candle

When we returned to the window, the figure was still there, but it was disappearing. It was only there a few minutes. On this occasion there was a little light from the moon. About 7.15 the same evening I went into the study with Mr. Brock and the representative of *The Times*. I carried a candle, which I put on a chair. On opening the shutters I again saw the figure against the wall, still holding a paper. On looking again, I saw that Dr. Astley was not in black, but was wearing his cassock and surplice, with a stole over his shoulders. The stole was of white and gold. The figure was there for quite ten minutes. It was there when I closed the shutter."

The Housemaid's Account

Florence Breeze, aged seventeen, housemaid, said :—" I came to the vicarage early in December, about a week before Mr. and Mrs. Astley left England. On December 26th, soon after 4.30, Mrs. Hartley called me into the study and told me to stand against the window. She had a candle which she placed on a chair close by. She asked me what I could see. I looked through the window and saw Dr. Astley. He was dressed in black and had a white paper in his hand. He was reading the paper. He was sitting at a table with books in front of him. He looked just as I have seen him in the study. I saw the figure for about five minutes. On December 29th Mrs. Hartley asked me to go to the study window again, but I was nervous and did not go."

Mr. Brock's Account

The Rev. Robert Brock said :—" I was seated in the dining-room of the Vicarage about 4.40 p.m. on December 26th when the housekeeper came and said : ' Come and see Dr. Astley.' I followed her into the study. She had a candle which she placed on a chair. She said, ' Now look.' I looked through the window across the lawn expecting to see somebody walking about there whom she had mistaken for Dr. Astley. I said, ' I can see nothing.' She said, ' You are looking at the wrong place. Look there.' She pointed towards the wall, which, with its buttress, juts out at right angles with the study wall. I said, ' Why, there is a clergyman there,' noticing the white collar almost shining out from the semi-darkness. I turned round and looked into the room to see if by any chance there was a reflection of myself. Not only was this impossible, but on looking again outside very carefully, I observed a clear outline of a face with a short beard (my face is clean shaven), a full view of a waistcoat with the coat thrown open, and across the waistcoat, from pocket to pocket, a heavy gold albert. I said to the housekeeper, ' I see a gold chain right across the chest.' ' Oh,' she said, ' that is the way

Dr. Astley always wears his chain.' I told her to take the candle out of the room. She did so, and the room was in darkness. I looked out and still saw the figure sitting, as it seemed to me, behind a desk with some books in front of him. I saw no paper in his hand. He was not looking at me, and seemed to be engaged in thought, as a studious man might be. I went out of the house, taking a lantern with me, and inspected the wall against which I had seen the figure. There was nothing whatever to be seen except the dark wall. I came back to the study and looked out again and could just see the wall, but no figure. Previously I had not seen the wall through the window. The time during which I actually saw the figure was about five minutes. I saw nothing in the nature of a halo. I am firmly convinced that what I saw was as real to me at the time as if Dr. Astley had actually been there. On December 29th, at 5.15, the housekeeper summoned me to the study window again. I could just discern a very dim outline. It was then disappearing. I saw the collar dimly, but not the chain, and could not make out the face. There was a little moonlight, and it was not so dark as on the 26th. We went into the study later the same evening, and the housekeeper said she saw Dr. Astley in his surplice. I saw nothing."

As for previous visions on the part of the percipients, Mr. Brock and the housemaid have experienced none, but Mrs. Hartley has numerous stories of such things to relate.

On Wednesday a letter was received from the chaplain, written on December 26th, showing that on December 26th Dr. Astley was suffering from concussion of the brain, and was presumably unconscious. Mr. Brock, commenting on this, suggested to the representative of *The Times* that it might probably form an explanation of the mysterious apparition. "My own impression on Saturday," he said, "having had no previous experience of these things, was that Dr. Astley was dead. Now it would really appear that when we saw his figure outside the study window, he was in a state of unconsciousness or delirium, and that in some mysterious way he was able to project himself in living form to his home in England, where perhaps, at the time, he supposed himself to be. It remains to be seen whether this explanation will commend itself to scientists and students of the supernatural."

(From the *Times Weekly Edition*, January 8th, 1909)

We have received the following telegram from the Rev. H. C. Muriel, British chaplain at Algiers, dated December 31st :—

"Dr. Astley is very amused. At the precise moment of the alleged astral appearance, allowing for the difference of Greenwich time, Dr. Astley was not in clerical garb, wearing a gold chain, at a book-laden desk, but was quietly resting in bed in

the hospital, conversing with me about his lost luggage. Both patients are doing well; the concussion is disappearing, and rest is needed."

This message from Mr. Muriel, which refers, evidently, to the first alleged astral appearance on December 26th, disposes of the theory that the vicar of East Rudham, while unconscious, was able "to project himself in living form to his home in England." Dr. Astley was not unconscious at the time when his "double" appeared to the household at the vicarage, nor, apparently, were his thoughts concerned with the affairs of his parish. The mysterious occurrences at East Rudham therefore remain unexplained. The acting vicar, the housekeeper, and the housemaid are still convinced that they saw "something," which they believed to be the figure of Dr. Astley. Mr. Brock, indeed, has repeatedly "cross-questioned" himself—to use his own phrase—as to whether by any possibility he can have been deceived, and he has come to the "perfectly unquestionable conclusion" that he was not deceived. Mr. Brock's absolute positiveness about the matter would appear to render less convincing the theory, which is doubtless entertained pretty widely, that Mrs. Hartley, the visionary, unconsciously invented the scene outside the study window, and by the influence of her own mind caused the others to imagine that they saw it too. Mr. Brock, a middle-aged clergyman, who has travelled widely and has had long experience of life in the Colonies—both in Queensland and in South Africa—does not give one the impression that he is likely to be easily influenced by an old woman's fancies. Then there is the housemaid. She did not know what to expect when she was called into the study by the housekeeper. She was told to look through the window and say what she saw—if she saw anything. Dr. Astley's name was not mentioned until she pronounced it herself.

This account of the case of Dr. Astley's astral body requires no comment from me, as all that need be said is contained in a letter from Mr. D. F. Shearer, published among the correspondence which interest in the case called forth.

"Sir,—It is almost a pity to spoil the story of a Christmas ghost in the twentieth century; if there were only some small addition of clanking chains, sepulchral voice, hidden crime, or concealed will, one might hesitate to introduce the science of optics as a basis for criticism. Unimaginative scientific men will, however, point out that the glass panel of the door through which the ghostly book-shelves were seen is a mirror in which the material book-shelves are always reflected, the reflection becoming visible to the eye when the light outside is less intense than the light within the room. This phenomenon can be readily seen in the window of a railway carriage at night or when passing through a dark tunnel. The next optical point is the condition of the observer's eyes. At the age of the housekeeper, the power of accommo-

dation has disappeared, and hence, if the image of the bookshelves is in focus, the door and the wall outside are out of focus; add to that a predisposition to see ghosts and a mental concentration on a particular person, and the observer's brain will believe that it perceives distinctly this individual when in fact the eye sees only an indistinct and blurred object, which has accidentally some resemblance to a human being.

"That this is the true explanation is shown by the statements of the other observers; the clergyman, by profession a believer in spirits, with his mind also concentrated on the absent vicar, is also of an age when accommodation is defective. He too sees the ghost, but not so definitely. The journalist, younger, with more active accommodation, not professionally a believer in spirits, having his mind quite unpossessed by concern for the absent vicar, sees the reflection of the bookshelves, but not the ghost.

"The publication of this ghost story is really of great value, because the solution show how little mystery there is in these tales, and how easily one can be deceived by an optical delusion of whose nature one is ignorant. Such deceptions are well known to psychologists, and in any modern work prints will be found in which the figures will not keep still, but are continually changing in number and appearance. If you have space, you might add one of these 'ghostly' pictures; it would be an interesting study for those of your readers who are ghost lovers on New Year's Eve."

(II.) The Case of Mr. and Mrs. Ames, Illustrating the Value of the Alleged "Crossing of Letters," as Evidence for Telepathy

The following case is not only very recent, but may be taken as typical of "psychic" experiences, quoted in support of telepathy, in which letters are said to have crossed. The supposed facts are contained in a letter to the *Daily News*, of September 11th, 1911, from Mr. and Mrs. Hugo Ames.

"Sir,—Our attention has been directed to the challenge and offer of £1000 to prove telepathy. My husband, Mr. Hugo Ames, and I have sent to Mr. Matthew Jarvis, solicitor, who advertised, our evidence which is as follows: 'In August—to be exact, on August 21st, 1908—I was in London in my own flat one afternoon, occupied in writing for one of Harmsworth's papers, when suddenly my pen stopped, and wrote "consciousness" three times. Then, stopping, I realised that I was being asked, urged, to write or discover something on consciousness. Almost immediately I felt I was in telepathic communication with Mr. Hugo Ames (I was then Mrs. Northesk Wilson). He was staying at Lysways Hall, in Staffordshire, and I was aware he was writing his new work, "Man, the God."[1] The telepathic demand was so exactly as if I had heard him say he was "stuck" on this point. I got up and went to my bookshelves, and took down a book containing an article by Annie Besant on Bose's description of consciousness in the vegetable and animal kingdom. I then put my own papers aside and began to write on my own experiences of consciousness, supplemented by Bose's theory. I caught the post, and sent Mr. Ames this paper, with a letter telling him why. The next morning, August 22nd, I received a telegram: Wonderful! Letters crossed. Discovered Bose's theory yesterday.

"This telegram, dated from Lysways, came a little while before the post which brought me a letter asking me to help him on this subject! Every one who knows us notices the wonderful affinity of thought, and we have proved that telepathy is of daily occurrence between us, and this complete harmony of feeling seems to run through the whole thread of our lives, making life very much worth living, as it seems to point to a unity of understanding, and comes back in some marvellous way to vibratory sympathy. So much so, that it means more than telepathy. For if my husband writes music, instantly I find words to put to the melody, and if we exchange the position at the piano the result is the same. Sometimes a certain humour attaches itself to this telepathy, when at Christmas we go out separately, and buy the same presents for the same members of the family!

"FLORA AMES,
"H. L. AMES.

"(The original telegram has been sent to Mr. Jarvis.)"

In this letter Mr. and Mrs. Ames make the following definite assertions. (1) That on the afternoon of August 21st, 1908, Mrs. Ames' pen wrote, more or less automatically, the word "consciousness" three times. (2) That, as the result of this, Mrs. Ames (who was not at that time married to Mr. Ames, and was named Mrs. N. Wilson) felt impelled to write a letter to Mr. Ames on the subject of consciousness and Bose's theory in particular. (3) That Mr. Ames, on receipt of this letter by the morning post of August 22nd, sent a telegram, "Wonderful! Letters crossed. Discovered Bose's theory yesterday." (4) That this telegram was received by Mrs. Ames on the morning of August 22nd, and that it was followed a little while after by a letter written by Mr. Ames the previous day. (5) That Mr. Ames' letter was posted on August 21st—for this is implied in the statement that the letters crossed—before the receipt of Mrs. Ames' letter.

After such a clear statement it will probably come as a surprise to the reader to learn that the evidence sent to Mr. Jarvis was very different in several particulars from the assertions made in their letter. But such is indeed the case! And the telegram, which happily has been kept, so far from corroborating the details, actually discredits the story! For the following are the differences:

1. Mrs. Ames' (at that time Mrs. N. Wilson) pen did not write "consciousness" three times. In the evidence submitted to Mr. Jarvis, it is said to have written "Consciousness—Theory of Consciousness—Plants. Can you help me?"

2. The telegram is *not* "dated from Lysways." It was handed in at Longdon, Staffordshire, at 11.15 a.m., and received in London (Sloane Square) at 12.6 p.m. (noon): so it was not received till the *afternoon* of August 22nd.

3. The words "Letters crossed" are *not* in the original telegram. The actual words are, "*Wonderful discovered Bose's theory yesterday began letter to you on this as yours arriving Hugh.*" From

the sense of the telegram the word "yesterday" obviously belongs to the words which precede it; consequently it is clear that no crossing of letters took place, and that Mr. Ames had not posted any letter to Mrs. Ames at the time of sending off the telegram, which was probably an hour or two later than the hour at which he received her letter. Further, if the two letters had crossed, the one from Mr. Ames would have come by the morning post, and would have preceded the telegram; whereas we are told that Mr. Ames' telegram came "a little while" before the post that brought his letter. How long a period of time "a little while" is meant to cover is not clear, though it is clear that the letter from Mr. Ames cannot have come till the afternoon or evening of August 22nd, and possibly not till the morning of August 23rd.

Thus, in this case, we have at least three points in which the narrators have shown their incapacity for recording facts accurately; and though the first two points are not of vital importance to the story, the third is, and the statement that "letters crossed" is an actual invention.

Curiously enough, their own letter itself proves that Mr. and Mrs. Ames do not possess telepathic powers. For, if they did, they surely would not be foolish enough to "buy the same presents for the same members of the family!" If this is a fact, all it suggests is that they have similar tastes and intellectual sympathies.

The reader must not think that Mr. and Mrs. Ames were deliberately trying to deceive the public, when they wrote their letter. Their *bona fides* is clear. And so is the moral of this story, namely, the worthlessness of accounts of "telepathic" experiences, uncorroborated by documentary evidence.

APPENDIX J

The Difficulties of Telepathy

The argument in support of telepathy on which Podmore lays stress, and on which Sir Oliver Lodge mainly relies in his reply to Professor Newcomb (*Nineteenth Century*, February, 1909, p. 206) is that the results of the census or inquiry, made by the S.P.R. in 1887-89, into the occurrence of hallucinations and the frequency of coincidental correspondence with the death of the person seen, prove that mere chance cannot be the explanation of this coincidence. The report is published in the tenth volume of the Proceedings of the S.P.R., and a very clear account of the

matter is given in Podmore's "Telepathic Hallucinations," p. 32. Briefly, the argument is as follows:—During the decade 1881-1890 the annual death-rate was 19.15 per 1000. Therefore the probability that any person taken at random would die within any given twenty-four hours was 19.15 in 365,000 = about 1 in 19,000. Now, the S.P.R. found that there were 1,684 among 17,000 apparently normal persons (9.9 per cent.) who remembered having experienced a sensory hallucination at some time in their lives. Of these cases there were 322 in which there was a recognised realistic apparition of the human figure, (doubtful cases being ignored). Of these again 62 are reported to have coincided with a death. Then, after making "liberal allowance" for unconscious exaggeration and forgetfulness, the Committee came to the conclusion that there exists a coincidence between hallucination and death in one case out of 43 cases of hallucination. But if there is no causal connection between the hallucination and the death, we should find only one coincidence in 19,000 cases.

This argument is certainly impressive, but loses considerable weight from the fact that the report is based on only 17,000 persons out of the whole community, and that a "liberal allowance" for unconscious exaggeration and forgetfulness is, to say the least, an unsatisfactory link in the chain. Further, it is to be noted that this argument, if its cogency be admitted, is not in favour of telepathy in particular, but only of some causal connection between hallucinations and deaths. And in many such cases it is clear that the percipient was aware of the illness of the person seen, so that a train of thought might easily have been set up, which would naturally determine the character of an hallucination and possibly be an exciting cause of its occurrence about the hour of death. Such an explanation is "on all fours" with the suggestion Podmore himself throws out to explain the repeated occurrence of sensory hallucinations in certain localities (haunted houses); for he writes:—"We have, then, the following sequence of events. First, loud and mysterious sounds, probably due to normal causes. Second, a state of uneasiness and apprehension amounting in some cases to actual panic in the occupants. Third, the appearance of manifold ghostly figures, sometimes of a terrifying character. The sequence is repeated again and again in the best authenticated narratives, those in which the incidents are recorded near the date of their happening, and it seems permissible to suggest that the sequence is a causal one—that real sounds, exaggerated and misinterpreted, induced in nervous persons a state of uneasy expectancy, and that this nervous state in its turn gave rise to hallucinations. We find a somewhat similar state of nervous expectancy with concomitant hallucinations at some spiritualistic séances." ("Telepathic Hallucinations," p. 123.)

I must now point out what a real and important fallacy *unconscious exaggeration* introduces. For, as I have already stated in a note on p. 107, the late M. Vaschide, assistant director of the laboratory of pathological psychology at the École des Hautes Études in Paris, showed by researches, published in 1908, that 96 per cent. of the subjective hallucinations among his friends, said to be veridical, did not correspond to any objective reality whatever, and that the supposed veridical coincidences in these cases were wholly a figment of the imagination. And he obtained these results from as many as 1374 hallucinatory experiences, studied first hand. Consequently, if we deduct 96 per cent. from the supposed veridical cases in the census of the S.P.R., we shall not have left more cases than can be accounted for by chance-coincidence.

But it may be asked, "Have we any justification for applying M. Vaschide's results to the S.P.R. census, seeing that the cases, before appearing therein, underwent a certain amount of sifting?" To any such question the answer is given by the article, already referred to, written by Mr. Taylor Innes in the *Nineteenth Century* (vol. xxii., pp. 174-194, 1887), where he shows that "Phantasms of the Living," written the previous year by Messrs. Gurney, Myers and Podmore, is characterised by "a *systematic relaxation of all ordinary rules*" of careful investigation in the matter of documentary evidence. Now, Gurney, Myers and Podmore were three of the most active members of the S.P.R. at that time and the census was largely based on cases appearing in their book. For "Phantasms of the Living" contained 702 numbered and selected cases "out of over 2,000 depositions which seemed *prima facie* to deserve attention." Of these 702 cases, 315 came to the authors second-hand, and so were put in a supplement; but upwards of 350 are cases in which the main account came directly from the percipient to the editors. These 350 cases, after investigation by the editors, were passed as coming up to their standard, and in most of them they showed conclusively that the event said to have been perceived really took place; but they gave practically no evidence that the percipients at a distance felt or perceived at the time of the event what they afterwards said they did. Indeed, their laxity in printing certain stories without documentary evidence is particularly striking in some twenty or more cases in which we are told that an epistolary document was issued at the time or that letters are said to have crossed, the production of which, with an official date and postmark, would have proved conclusively the truth of the percipient's story of a vision. And there are at least a hundred cases where the narrative implies that documentary corroboration could reasonably be demanded. Yet of the 702 cases, including 350 first-hand narratives, there is *not one* case, "in which the indefatigable editors have 'seen or

ascertained' a letter or document issued at the time by the narrator, so as to prove his story to be true." Mr. Innes therefore says, in his conclusions, " I am not aware of anything which can account for this, unless it be that this whole class of stories is without real foundation."

Again, a point which the Committee seem to have ignored is the average age of the perceived person at the time of death. This, to my mind, is an important factor ; as, if the average age was over sixty, the expectancy of life would be lessened. For if it is true that the chance of any person taken at random dying on a particular day is one in 19,000, then the chance that, of persons over sixty, a particular one taken at random will die on a particular day is greater than one in 19,000.

Another point which Podmore makes clear in a tabulated summary of the census report is that out of 1,112 cases of visual hallucinations there were 830 of realistic human apparitions and only 25 of animals. Now, in the evidence for telepathy, I have come across instances of the apparition of a beloved dog at the moment of death, as in the case quoted on p. 100, so that if the mind of a favourite dog can affect at a distance the mind of its master, we should expect numerous examples of this class of case. But, judging from the census report, it is at least thirty times rarer than that of human apparitions. If, then, chance coincidence is admitted to be a satisfactory explanation of this class of case, where there is no reason to believe that knowledge of a dog's illness had started a worrying train of thought, I cannot see why the same explanation should not apply with even greater force to cases of human apparitions. For the illness of a friend or relative would be more likely than that of a dog to start an anxious train of thought resulting in an hallucination ; and so the discrepancy in the two sets of figures would be naturally explained. As regards the cases where the apparition of a dog coincided with its death, I am afraid that it will never be possible to form even an approximate estimate of what the numbers should be on a basis of pure chance. For, on the one hand, those cases, in which there was a correspondence between the apparition and hour of death, would be just those which would be remembered, and, on the other hand, the death-rate of dogs can hardly be calculated. However, owing to numerous causes of which their shorter life and liability to accident are the chief, one would be justified in assuming, I think, that the death-rate among dogs must be greater than among human beings, and so in favour of chance as an explanation of coincidence between apparition and death in those cases where the illness of a dog had not started a subconscious train of anxious thought.

So much for the chief argument in support of telepathy. I will now consider some of the other difficulties with which the subject

abounds. In experiments on thought-transference—a name sometimes given to the experimental transference of an idea or mental picture from an agent to a percipient at close quarters, in contradistinction to "telepathy," which is then used for the subconscious transmission, through practically any distance, of ideas, generally bound up with personality—the intervention of a floor or wall or sometimes even of a screen between the agent and percipient, (*see* an account of experiments with cards described in Sir Oliver Lodge's "Survival of Man," p. 58,) puts an end to a successful result; and it may not unfairly be said, in the words of Professor Newcomb, *à propos* of experiments in thought-transference: "Possibly you may succeed, but the more pains you take to avoid all sources of error, the less likely success will be." (*Nineteenth Century*, January, 1909, p. 132.) On the other hand, Podmore, whom I take as the most critical writer I know, with a tendency to believe in telepathy, makes it perfectly plain in his numerous writings that the evidence for spontaneous telepathy points to its occurring quite readily at a distance without any conscious effort on the part of agent or percipient. This applies mainly to cases of sensory hallucinations, but is also true of some of the apparently successful experiments of Miss Ramsden and Miss Miles, who exchanged postcards every day, recording what they had been thinking of or had perceived. (*Journal S.P.R.*, June, 1908, and *Proceedings S.P.R.*, xxi., p. 60.) Consequently it looks as if the same telepathic explanation cannot logically be given both to experimental thought-transference, where the agent concentrates his mind on the mental picture to be transferred, and to telepathic hallucinations, where the processes are carried out quite subconsciously.

Again, in telepathic hallucinations there is no uniformity which would imply the existence of a faculty operating by definite laws. Thus, if we examine the seven examples of telepathic hallucinations which Podmore has selected as among the best verified instances of the kind for illustrating the argument in the first chapter of his book, "Telepathic Hallucinations; The New View of Ghosts," we find the following remarkable diversity:—

In No. 1 the percipient (a lady) sees, about 8.30 p.m.; the figure of a friend (a man) wearing a cap, which she had never seen him wear before, at a time when she had no reason to think he was ill, and when he was lying in bed unconscious a long distance off, owing to the rather sudden onset of an illness from which he did not die for another six days.

In No. 2 a young lady saw the figure of her fiancé about 12.30 noon, which corresponded more or less with the hour of his death at a time when she had no reason to think he was seriously ill, although his sister had written three days before to say he had a cold, and could not keep an engagement made for that evening.

In No. 3 a child of twelve saw, about 9.30 a.m., the figure of a page-boy who had died two hours before. The figure was dressed in the

working clothes worn by the page-boy when he was in the service of the child's mother.

In No. 4 the figure of a young man appeared about 2.30 a.m., to the mother of his fiancée three hours after his death from a wound received during his participation in an insurrectionary movement in Rio de Janeiro. The figure was dressed in the clothes which the young man usually wore at home, and not in the clothes he was wearing at the time of his death.

In No. 5 a clergyman saw, about 10.30 p.m., the figure of an old friend, whom he had not seen for ten or eleven years, several days after his death.

In No. 6 three ladies saw the figure of an unknown man about 9.45 p.m. in a room lighted only by the street lamp outside. Two of them first caught sight of the figure reflected in a mirror.

In No. 7 there is an account of a house haunted by a figure which, apparently, was that of a child eight years old, who had died in the house thirty years before.

This diversity suggests that there may be more than one explanation for cases like these, taken as a whole, as for example, in No. 6, the suggestion that there was a real man present might be a possible explanation. Further, the combination of probable and improbable details, as for example, in No. 1, the cap worn by the figure, suggests that the same processes are at work which so often produce those absurd combinations characteristic of dreams; and dreams are admittedly the product of unconscious cerebral processes, often started by a train of thought before going to sleep. In this case, if telepathy were given as an explanation, we should have to assume that either the unconscious man was subconsciously thinking of himself wearing the cap in question, or that some friend in the neighbourhood was doing so. But in all these cases there is considerable uncertainty as to whether the percipients felt at the time of the event what they afterwards said they did, for Mr. Innes's criticism of "Phantasms of the Living" applies here too.

Vagueness of detail in the evidence for telepathy often leaves so much room for variety of interpretation according to bias, that, as in the case of hallucinations said to be veridical, unconscious exaggeration and forgetfulness have always to be taken into account. In the case of experiments with Mrs. Piper, bias has played a very great part in the interpretation of the records, as I have tried to show in Appendix Q; and one of the subtlest and perhaps most important sources of fallacy is the unreliability of the memory. In so many cases the value of the evidence depends entirely on the statement, made with absolute assurance by one or more persons, that they are certain that never in the course of their lives have they been aware of the facts seen in a vision or mentioned in a thought-transference experiment. Thus one of the most recent examples of a case of supposed telepathy of this kind is the experience of two ladies published by them under the title of "An Adventure" (Macmillan & Co., 1911),

recording a vision or waking hallucination in which they noted details which they afterwards found were historically accurate; details, the knowledge of which they state had never at any time been possessed by their conscious minds. As the incident is so well known, I think it forms an interesting case to discuss here, although in many respects it possesses unique features, and was not reported with sufficient scientific accuracy to enable one to be certain of the facts underlying the experience, so that the attempt to give a serious explanation to a single experience of this kind is very unsatisfactory.

In this adventure the ladies, on a hot August afternoon at Versailles in 1901 (the day of the month is not given), lost their way after lunch in the grounds close to the Petit Trianon, and wandered among woods and along paths which they afterwards found had no existence, but which historical research gave them some reasons for supposing had existed in the time of Louis XVI. Not only this, for they talked to two gardeners; and a young man, heavily cloaked, who came running after them, appearing and disappearing from nowhere, directed them in the direction of the Petit Trianon. Then they both saw a gentleman, whose face wore an odious expression and was marked with smallpox, sitting on the steps of a kiosk; and while one of them, towards the end of the adventure, saw a lady sketching close to the terrace of the Petit Trianon, the other, at the beginning, saw a woman handing a jug to a girl at the door of a cottage. They noted, more or less clearly, the dresses worn by all these persons, and found in subsequent years by historical inquiry that they seemed to accord with the fashions of the dresses which were worn respectively by the gardeners, villagers, and courtiers at the Petit Trianon, and by Marie Antoinette herself, about the year 1790. Finally, on ascending the terrace of the Petit Trianon and looking in at one of the boarded windows, a lackey ran out of a building close by (his appearance and dress are not described), slamming the door behind him, and conducted them round to the main entrance, where they joined a French wedding-party being shown round the place, and afterwards drove back to their hotel at Versailles, where they had tea.

Now, I think it extremely probable that the facts recorded by them are to some extent true, being based on real misinterpreted perceptions; but that—as in day dreams, the hypnagogic state of sleep, and other hallucinatory states—there was probably also an intrusion of wholly "representative" elements, so that I feel justified in remaining agnostic both as to the extent of their previous ignorance of the history of the Petit Trianon and also about the accuracy of the recorded details and their exact correspondence with what subsequent researches showed may have been historical facts. For psychologists, who have made a special study of dreams, are clear that it is impossible to be certain that the memory of a dream is accurate, and in this particular experience there are two peculiarly unsatisfactory features. (1) They were so unaware that anything out of the ordinary had taken place, that they did not discuss any of these experiences till one day, a week afterwards, when they were writing letters describing their

visit to Versailles, and, in trying to recall the expedition, they agreed that the place was haunted, and that a feeling of depression stole over them at a particular spot on their walk from the Palace to the Petit Trianon. (2) It was not till three months later that they wrote down their respective accounts of the experience which are published in their book.

Their own explanatory theory is that they entered a psychic atmosphere created around the place by the brain of Marie Antoinette when she was spending the long day of August 10th, 1792, with the Legislative Assembly at the Tuilleries and trying to divert her mind by thinking about the Trianon. But this is hypothesis pure and simple; for, if they were trespassers on some one else's memory, it is only bias which makes them think it was Marie Antoinette's; and it is noteworthy that, while proclaiming a bias against the occult, they mention, almost with pride, that one of them has a "deliberately undeveloped power of second-sight" and that the other comes of a family possessing powers of "premonition accompanied by vision." Such statements are the reverse of impressive; for here they assume, what has still to be proved, that such gifts are a practical reality, and they seem to consider that the same power can enable the possessor to see the past or future! The description of their experiences is not so clear—thus, they make no mention of the legs of the young man who came running after them, but only mention the buckles on his shoes; and similarly, they are vague as to whether it was a rock or what it was from behind which he appeared—as to exclude the possibility that many of the details took definite shape in their minds afterwards; and altogether it is difficult to be certain how far forgotten memories before the experience, or in the interval before it was recorded, can be said not to have influenced the account. On the other hand, I think we may say for certain that these ladies, on a hot afternoon, after a tiring round of sight-seeing and lunch, had a waking hallucination, closely resembling the hypnagogic state preceding sleep, which is characterised by dissociation of consciousness and diminution of apperception, and in which illusions of memory (paramnesia) are particularly liable to occur. (*See* "The World of Dreams," by Havelock Ellis, pp. 221-260.) Such a state is often also attended by depression or by a feeling of oppression as any one inclined to be bilious will know who has gone to sleep after dinner.

Examples of retrocognition or pseudo-memories are a particularly interesting study, and there can be no doubt that the explanation of them is given by a study of the hypnagogic state which is a transition between sleeping and waking, and which sometimes occurs in the middle of active mental life as the result of excitement or exhaustion. In this state there may even be loss of the consciousness of personality. Thus Jastrow records

the case ("The Subconscious," p. 137) of a lady student absorbed in work, who, hearing outside the door the shuffling of rubber-heels such as she wore, said, "There goes ——," naming herself.

Another most important possibility must always be borne in mind in telepathic experiments, namely, that sensory impressions may affect consciousness without being consciously perceived—in other words, a subconscious impression may subsequently affect consciousness.

Thus Jastrow and Nuttall, about twenty-five years ago, did some most valuable experiments with an electro-magnet. One observer (the percipient) sat on a chair in a room on the third floor of a tall building with his head between the two poles of the magnet, which was supported on two adjoining tables. The other observer (the agent) was in a room on the ground floor, turning by hand a gramme-dynamo machine, and so generating the current which was conducted to the electro-magnet by heavy insulated wires running out of the windows along the wall of the building and in through a window on the third floor. The agent communicated with the percipient by a system of electric signals; otherwise they were *completely isolated* from one another, with over thirty feet and two heavy floors between them. The experiment consisted in the percipient trying to say when the coil was magnetised. They made eight hundred observations during a week, and on one of the last days, a quiet Sunday when the trams had stopped running, they came to the conclusion that at times they were able to detect the noise resulting from the turning of the dynamo, and that it was conducted along the wires. There was also another fallacy. For they found that on magnetising and demagnetising the magnet, a faint but yet audible molecular crepitation occurred, the sound produced being a very dull, rather sudden, click. The click accompanying demagnetisation was much more distinct than that accompanying magnetisation.

During the first eight hundred experiments, the proportion of correct guesses indicated that there was some factor at work other than that of pure chance, and if they had not discovered the two fallacies, above-mentioned, their experiments would have been supposed to prove the existence of a magnetic sense for the detection of magnetic waves, the "odyllic fluid" of the old mesmerists. However, they were able to exclude these two fallacies, and then made 1,950 more observations on themselves and various students; whereupon the proportion of correct guesses showed that there was no other factor present than that of pure chance.

Thus auditory indications of which the percipient was utterly unconscious were used as a basis for forming the judgment during their first series of 800 *experiments.* (See *Proc., American S.P.R.*, vol. i. p. 116, July, 1886.)

One could not have a better example both of the importance of subconscious impressions received through the senses, and of the difficulty of excluding fallacies in telepathic experiments, which, instead of being done in hundreds, are usually only done by tens or even by units.

In view of the above facts and considerations, I believe that many experiences somewhat analogous to that recorded in 'An Adventure," but often too transitory and trivial to record, like

the recognition of a strange place, are most easily explained by some latent and forgotten memory, or else by an undetected interval between the first subconscious impression made on the senses and the conscious recognition of one's surroundings. Several times in my own experience I have detected the emergence of facts which my first impulse prompted me to feel certain had never been known to me but which I afterwards have found were really latent in my memory. A good illustration of this tendency is afforded by the following incident, which occurred to a highly observant and critical engineer I know, who had an argument with a friend about the solution of a geometrical problem which he was certain he had never seen or heard of before. He was prepared to swear that the problem was insoluble, and tried to prove that such was the case. Judge, then, of his surprise when there was handed to him a solution of it in his own handwriting, some twenty years old!

This same friend may also be quoted as proving the difficulty of getting any satisfactory evidence for telepathy. For, in his restless desire to get at something really convincing—having during the last ten years carried out many experiments and taken a great interest in the subject—he offered only a few months ago £1000 to three of the leading English authorities on telepathy for satisfactory proof of *one recent case*, with the following result, which I give in his own words :—

"The first replied at once, expressing his surprise at my imagining 'that incontrovertible evidence could be obtained at all in an inductive problem'! The second at first very kindly expressed his willingness to help, and appeared very keen to meet me and talk the matter over; but, after seeing No. 1, he wrote, 'Whilst anxious to help you, I could not undertake to prove the results of a long and difficult investigation to order or for a pecuniary offer,' and the third replied, 'You may offer £1,000,000 with perfect safety. No sane person will back any mortal to do telepathy to order'!

"If any proofs existed, they should surely be forthcoming; but it is something to get from one of our leading scientists, who has often declared his belief in telepathy, the admission that it is an 'inductive problem'!"

Lastly, the opinion of those experts who have studied the evidence for telepathy, and have finally, after much experience, come to an adverse conclusion, should have great weight—especially if coming from scientifically trained men; for such a conclusion has been arrived at in face of the natural tendency to believe in the occult. Two of the most noteworthy are the following: (*a*) Professor Simon Newcomb, the late distinguished astronomer and mathematician, was the first President of the American Branch of the S.P.R. in 1884, so that he took an interest in the subject for many years. Now, in the *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1909, p. 139, he wrote :—"Nothing has been brought out by the researches of the psychical society and its able

collaborators, except what we should expect to find in the ordinary course of nature." (*b*) Dr. J. Milne Bramwell, the English authority on the subject of hypnotism, took part many years ago with fellow-members of the S.P.R. in experiments on thought-transference. Here is the summary of his experience in 1909 :—

"During the last twenty years, I have searched for evidence of telepathy and also taken part in the experiments of other observers; the results, however, have been invariably negative." ("Hypnotism and Treatment by Suggestion," p. 118, Cassell & Co.)

In addition to these, I must mention the late Mr. Frank Podmore, secretary of the S.P.R. from 1888-1895, whose books during the past twenty years show immense knowledge and the most painstaking study of psychical subjects. His opinion, it is true, inclines to a belief in the existence of telepathy; but this he only allows himself to express in the most guarded terms—twenty years after the founding of the S.P.R.—as follows :—"For my own part, I see no reason to doubt that if the existence of thought-transference should eventually be demonstrated—and I do not claim that the demonstration is or ought to be considered complete—the explanation will be found strictly within the region of natural law. . . . It must be admitted that the older evidence is far from demonstrative. Possibly, apart from two recent items—the experiments at Brighton conducted by Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick and the records of Mrs. Piper's trance-utterances—the question of the reality of such a faculty would hardly seem worth discussion." ("Modern Spiritualism," Introduction, p. xviii.)

In conclusion, then, I may say that, while admitting the *a priori* possibility of telepathy and the superficial impressiveness of the evidence for it, I adopt the same attitude towards the evidence as Professor Newcomb, when he wrote *à propos* of spontaneous and coincidental hallucinations :—"The seeming wonders—and they are plentiful—are at best of the same class as the wonder when a dozen drawers of the black grain of corn out of a million are presented to us." (This refers to a previous paragraph in which the probability of coincidence is illustrated by the experiment of making every inhabitant of Great Britain draw one grain of corn out of a bag containing a million normal grains and a single black one.) "We are asked to admit an attraction between their hands and the black grain. The proof is conclusive enough, until we remember that this dozen is only a selection out of millions, the rest of whom have not drawn the black grain. The records do not tell us, and never can tell us, about the uncounted millions of people who have forgotten that they ever had a vision or any illusion; or who, having such, did not find it associated with any notable occurrence. Count them all in, and nothing is left on which to base any theory of occultism." (*Loc. cit.*, p. 139.) This attitude, however, does not prevent me hoping that further

experiments in telepathy will be carried out by researchers trained in experimental psychology, for there is great need of such to throw adequate light on the question, which till then we must "leave in a decent obscurity"—to quote Podmore's words about Eusapia ("The Newer Spiritualism," p. 143), which slightly altered might run:—*In any case the matter is not to be decided by argument, but by experiment. Let renewed and again renewed attempts be made by properly trained scientists to procure telepathic effects under laboratory conditions, and, until success has been obtained, let us leave telepathy in a decent obscurity.*

APPENDIX K

Experience of Mr. Chedo Mijatovitch with a Medium named Vango

The following letter appeared in *Light*, p. 136, March 21st, 1908.

"I am not yet a Spiritist, but am now decidedly on the way to become one. At any rate, I believe that certain spiritistic phenomena are genuine, and that to study such phenomena as a scientific problem is not only very interesting but most important in the interests of truth and human happiness. In that belief I have been strengthened by a personal experience, which I consider it almost a duty to communicate to you for publication.

"Certain Spiritists in Southern Hungary requested me by letter to do them a service by trying to—so to say—interview the spirit of a great sovereign of the Servians of the fourteenth century on a certain question. Indeed, they wrote that in a séance, and through a medium, the spirit of that king advised them to ask me to do them that service, seeing that in London there are many mediums through whom he could communicate with me. As just about that time my wife read somewhere about the remarkable powers of a certain Mr. Vango in that direction, I went to Mr. Vango. I never saw that gentleman before, and I am sure he never saw me before that day. Nor is there any reason to suppose that he had been informed, or that he could guess who I was. To my question if he could put me in communication with a certain spirit, he answered modestly that sometimes he succeeds in doing so, but not always, as other spirits sometimes come forward whom the inquirer does not want. However, he was willing to try, and requested me to concentrate all my thoughts on the spirit with whom I wished to speak.

"After Mr. Vango had put himself into the trance, he said: 'Yes, here is the spirit of a young man who is most anxious to

tell you something, but he talks in a language of which I do not understand a word.'

"The king on whom I concentrated my thoughts died in 1350 as a middle-aged man. I wondered who the young man could be whose spirit was anxious to talk with me, and asked Mr. Vango to reproduce at least one single word pronounced by that young spirit. He said he would try to do so. He bent towards the wall, in front of which he sat in an armchair, and listened for some time intensely. Then he slowly repeated, to my utter astonishment, these words in the Servian language, 'Molim vas pishite moyoy materi Nataliyi da ye molim da mi oprosti,' 'I request you to write to my mother Natalie that I beg of her to forgive me.' Of course, I immediately recognised that it was the spirit of the murdered King Alexander. I asked Mr. Vango how the young man looked, to which he answered at once: 'Oh, horrible; his body is covered with wounds.' If I needed a further proof that it was the spirit of King Alexander, I got it when Mr. Vango said, 'The spirit wants me to tell you that he now very much regrets that he did not follow your advice concerning a certain monument, and the policy connected with it.' This related to some confidential advice I gave King Alexander two years before his assassination, and which he thought he could not entertain at that time, and perhaps would do in the beginning of the year 1904. I ought to add that Mr. Vango reproduced the Servian words in a peculiar manner, reading syllable by syllable, commencing from the last one and going backwards to the first, thus: 'Lim, molim; te, shite; pishite; yoy, mayoy; ri, teri, materi; liyi, taliyi, Nataliyi, etc.'

"Need I say that Mr. Vango, awakened from his trance, was not conscious that he—or rather the spirit of King Alexander—had spoken in Servian?

"As I make this statement in the interest of the truth, I do not hesitate to sign my full name and character.

"CHEDO MIJATOVITCH, formerly Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Servia to the Court of St. James.

"39, Redcliffe Gardens, S.W.
"*March 9th*, 1908."

This is a most excellent example of the type of experience which convinces the ordinary unscientific, and so somewhat credulous mind—as it obviously convinced Mr. Chedo Mijatovitch—and it therefore lends itself to criticism in an interesting way, especially as it is on the testimony of a witness whose respectability is above suspicion.

I will first of all draw attention to some unscientific blemishes in the record of the experience, then I will point out a highly

suspicious element in the story; and lastly, I will analyse the story after the manner of G. H. Lewes' analysis of table-turning, given in Appendix F, to discover what is the most probable explanation of the experience.

The following are unscientific blemishes in the record :—

1. "I never saw that gentleman (Mr. Vango) before, and I am sure that he had never seen me before that day." Mr. Mijatovitch might be pretty sure that he had never seen the medium before, but he cannot have been sure that the medium had never seen him.

2. "Nor is there any reason to suppose that he had been informed, or that he could guess who I was." As I shall shortly show, there are good reasons for supposing the medium had been informed of the probability of Mr. Mijatovitch seeking an interview with some medium.

3. "After Mr. Vango had put himself into the trance." It would have been more accurate to have said, "After Mr. Vango *appeared* to have put himself into the trance."

4. "Of course I immediately recognised that it was the spirit of the murdered King Alexander." Why "of course"? Assuming the presence of a spirit, why should it not have been equally well some spirit masquerading as King Alexander? Or again, assuming the existence of telepathy, why should it not have been the telepathic influence of his friends in Hungary or of Queen Natalie herself on the medium?

5. "Need I say that Mr. Vango, awakened from his trance, was not conscious that he had spoken in Servian?" This question might be taken sarcastically, were it not that Mr. Mijatovitch was so obviously convinced of the medium's *bona fides*. It would have been, at any rate, a more exact statement of fact to have said, "Mr. Vango, awakened from his trance, *said that he* was not conscious that he had spoken in Servian."

The following is a distinctly suspicious element in the story which really wants explaining before the experience is worthy of being given serious consideration.

If the spirit talked in a language of which the medium said, "I do not understand a word," how was it that the medium could only give the message for Queen Natalie in Servian, spelt out syllable by syllable, and yet could afterwards say, "The spirit wants me to tell you that he very much regrets that he did not follow your advice concerning a certain monument and the policy connected with it?" How possibly could the medium know what the spirit wanted to say, if he did not understand a word of Servian, which was the language the spirit was talking?

Let us now analyse the story in detail, so as to discover the most probable explanation of this experience. The only facts of which we can be certain, to start with, are the following: (*a*) That

the medium uttered a sentence in Servian, which translated means, " I request you to write to my mother Natalie that I beg of her to forgive me." (*b*) That Mr. Mijatovitch denies the possibility that the medium can have known who he was, or that he was anxious to get into communication with the spirit of a Servian monarch (though from the sentence in Mr. M.'s letter, " To my question if he could put me into communication with a certain spirit," it is not clear whether Mr. M. mentioned the Servian monarch or no).

Of the metaphysical explanations of the phenomenon the two most probable are perhaps (*a*) the presence of a " spirit "—and, if so, possibly that of King Alexander—and (*b*) the telepathic influence of some person or persons in Hungary or elsewhere. But in neither case is a particle of proof brought forward either that on the one hand a " spirit " was present, or that, on the other, any one in the world was thinking about King Alexander and his policy connected with a monument at that moment. For the facts which Mr. Mijatovitch adduces as proof of the presence of a " spirit," (and in particular of the " spirit " of King Alexander,) are (1) that Mr. Vango said he saw the spirit of a young man; and (2) that Mr. Vango said, on being questioned, that the spirit's body appeared covered with wounds.

Now, it will be noticed that these two facts, given as proof of the presence of a spirit, consist merely of statements of the medium Vango, and their value is entirely vitiated by two considerations: (1) that mediums in general have such a bad reputation for fraud, that their statements and actions must always be viewed with suspicion. (2) That Mr. Vango in particular lays himself open to the charge of fraud by saying, " The spirit wants me to tell you that he now very much regrets that he did not follow your advice concerning a certain monument and the policy connected with it," after having stated that he did not understand a word of the language the spirit was speaking.

Further, the fact that Mr. Mijatovitch says that the message about the monument and the policy connected therewith referred to some confidential advice which he gave King Alexander two years before his assassination, is no proof of the presence of the " spirit " of King Alexander, although Mr. Mijatovitch prefaces his reference to it by saying, " If I needed a further proof that it was the spirit of King Alexander." For " confidential " advice about a monument does not exclude the possibility of King Alexander having referred to it during the two years before his assassination. And, in any case, the fact that Mr. Mijatovitch gave some " confidential " advice about this monument might easily have become known to others. Also the fact that Mr. Vango knew about it, although he could not understand a word of Servian, spoken by the supposed " spirit," proves that the

knowledge of this "confidential" advice was not restricted to Mr. Mijatovitch.

Now, when we leave metaphysical explanations, vitiated by their method, and seek the unknown by the objective method through the avenues of the known, we get a practically unbroken chain of evidence circumstantially supporting the hypothesis that Mr. Vango was a member of a mediumistic "bureau" for exchanging information, and that his utterance of the Servian sentence, "Molim vas pishite moyoy materi Nataliyi da ye molim da mi oprosti," was all arranged beforehand.

Here are the links in the chain :—

1. Mr. Mijatovitch's friends in Hungary were advised—with the help of a medium—by the supposed spirit of the Servian king, who died in 1350, to ask Mr. Mijatovitch to communicate with the said king's "spirit" in London through a medium. Consequently, the probability of their writing to ask Mr. Mijatovitch to do this was known to several people in Hungary, including a medium.

2. Mr. Mijatovitch went to see Vango because Mrs. Mijatovitch had read of his remarkable success in transmitting messages from "spirits." If Vango belonged to a mediumistic "bureau" for distributing information, he would be likely to get remarkable results.

3. Although Mr. Mijatovitch says Vango cannot have known who he was, or that he was going to pay him a visit, yet all the members of the "bureau" in London, if such existed, would have been warned of the possibility of a visit from Mr. Mijatovitch.

4. In view of his probable visit, it would be also decided what should be said to Mr. Mijatovitch to impress him. Servian being an unusual language in London, some short sentence, easily remembered, would not unnaturally be chosen. As the quarrels of Queen Natalie with her son Alexander were matters of public knowledge throughout Europe, and had been discussed in the English newspapers at the time of their occurrence, a reference thereto is a most probable subject to have been chosen for the Servian sentence.

5. There is nothing to show that Mr. Mijatovitch's advice about the policy connected with the monument was not known to certain people in Servia ; and, if so, there is nothing improbable in the view that the agent in Hungary, who gave the information to the bureau in London about the probability of a visit from Mr. Mijatovitch, also sent the advice to bring in some reference to Mr. Mijatovitch's connection with this monument, as likely to impress him. It is significant that the reference to this monument and policy, (both difficult words,) was not given in Servian, but that the medium, in introducing the subject, merely said, "The spirit wants me to tell you."

6. Lastly, this theory of a "bureau" explains very naturally why Vango began the interview with Mr. Mijatovitch by saying, in answer to Mr. Mijatovitch's question whether he could put him in communication with a certain spirit, that he could not be certain of success, as spirits other than the one wanted sometimes came forward. For it is a significant fact that it was not the supposed "spirit" of the mediæval king who talked through the medium Vango, a king about whose life Vango was probably quite ignorant. Again, there is nothing improbable about supposing that the "spirit" of King Alexander had been substituted by the "bureau" in London for that of the mediæval king, as the murder of King Alexander would be known to Vango and others in London, facts including, on this theory, his "confidential" relations to Mr. Mijatovitch. Likewise by substituting King Alexander's spirit for the mediæval king, it was possible to bring in a description of the "spirit," by saying its body was covered with wounds, which would impress Mr. Mijatovitch in the highest degree, and convince him, as obviously was the case, of the genuineness of the spirit.

Here we have an unbroken chain of circumstantial evidence showing how it was that the medium Vango was able to reproduce a sentence in Servian—purporting to come from the spirit of the murdered King Alexander—when Mr. Mijatovitch called upon him, if we assume that "a bureau for distributing information among mediums" exists in London and elsewhere. This hypothesis of course cannot be proved (unless Vango or some other medium owns up), so that this natural explanation of Mr. Mijatovitch's experience cannot be said to have been verified or proved. But we must remember that the alternative metaphysical explanations of a "spirit," of telepathy or what not, are likewise unproved and unverified; and, whereas the natural explanation of a "bureau" is an adequate cause of the phenomena, since we know something about the nature of "bureaus," the metaphysical explanation of a "spirit" at any rate is not an adequate cause, as we can predicate nothing about "spirits" or other supernatural agencies. Then, while there are many suspicious circumstances in connection with accepting the metaphysical explanation of a "spirit," there is an unbroken chain of probable facts in connection with the natural explanation of "a mediumistic bureau for distributing information." Therefore I can with confidence leave it for the intelligent reader to decide which is the most probable explanation.

APPENDIX L

Answers to Prayer

The abuse of prayer and the confusion which exists in many people's minds as to what constitutes evidence of prayer being answered were again very well illustrated by a certain Mr. Cowan, whose action gave rise to some interesting correspondence. The following account is from the *Weekly Times* of January 22nd, 1909, while the correspondence is taken from the same paper a week later.

Anti-Vivisectionist Fanaticism

An extraordinary document, with a covering letter signed "M. Cowan," was received on Saturday by a number of the licensees under the Vivisection Act. The writer sets forth how he heard a person in a London hotel say that he knew a person who was in the habit of praying from time to time for the death of one of our leading vivisectors, and that the man indicated had always died. The writer himself, knowing of the efficacy of prayer, thought of trying the same course, with the result that "about a fortnight later one of our most distinguished medical scientists dropped."

Sir Herbert Stephen, writing in *The Times*, says :—"Surely the most impressive thing about M. Cowan—for one must presume his identity with the 'M. C.' who signs his 'enclosure'—is his moderation. Why does he not make earnest prayer that the Almighty will promptly remove all holders of licences to experiment on living animals ? If all the licensees 'dropped' promptly —which apparently means in about a fortnight—there would be no further need of agitation or prayer on the subject. It seems to me that M. Cowan is bound by his own theories to exercise his power of earnest prayer decisively, unmistakably, and once for all."

The secretaries of anti-vivisection societies having disclaimed responsibility for "M. Cowan's" methods, Mr. G. Bernard Shaw writes :—

"Surely the protests of the Anti-Vivisection Society in this matter are very unnecessary.

"The genuine vivisectionists would be the last people in the world to protest against an experiment so interesting, so important and so thoroughly scientific in method. It is true that it may cost one or two of them their lives; but what is a life or two when weighed in the balance against the extension of scientific knowledge, and the enormous national economy which will result if the experiment should happily succeed in proving that our

vast military and naval expenditure is entirely unnecessary, and that the destruction of our country's enemies may in future be cheaply and comfortably conducted at home upon our knees? The suggestion by Mr. Sidney Trist, that instead of praying for the deaths of the vivisectors we should pray for their regeneration, would break down in practice, owing to the extreme difficulty of deciding whether the vivisector had been actually regenerated or not, whereas here can be no manner of doubt as to whether he is dead or alive. I confess I do not see how the vivisectors can object without a complete surrender of their position. The attitude taken by their champions is obviously purely sentimental."

APPENDIX M

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE VIEWS ABOUT THE DEATH OF MRS. EDDY AND HER PROBABLE RESURRECTION

(From the *Daily Telegraph*, December 31st, 1910)

MRS. AUGUSTA STETSON, the excommunicated leader of the First Church of Christian Science in New York, declares in a formal statement her belief in the imminent resurrection in the semblance of the human form of Mrs. Eddy. . . .

Before her excommunication by the board of directors in Boston, which governs the affairs of the spiritual and temporal Eddyites, Mrs. Stetson held, and even now holds, a unique position amongst the Christian Scientists. She is a woman of considerable learning and much administrative ability, thoroughly conscientious, and for the time ranked almost with Mrs. Eddy herself as the inspired leader. In New York, where for long she was the presiding official of the First Church of the Christian Scientists, she has many influential sympathisers, who believe that she was wrongly deposed from the leadership by the jealousy of persons whom she had offended.

Mrs. Stetson declares that the triumph over death is of the essence of Christian Science. She says:—

"I am watching and waiting for the demonstration by Mrs. Eddy of herself in the semblance of a human form. It may be to-day, it may be next week, it may be not until twenty years from now; but even for twenty years I will wait, confident in the ultimate proof by her of her triumph over death. I know it will come. I know it must come. Nobody but Mrs. Eddy, who is now one with the truth, could be the logical person to demonstrate in this hour.

"I believe that when the undying mind loses the earth-thought, or the body, as you would say, it passes slowly from the fleshly concept to the purely spiritual. I believe that Mrs. Eddy will demonstrate herself before she has made this transition. Then she will still have the appreciable aspect of the material, so that she can be seen by the eyes of men.

"Those who have sufficiently elevated themselves so as nearly to approach the spiritual, leaving the material concepts behind them, will be the first to see Mrs. Eddy, but the whole world shall be a witness to her demonstrations in the end."

When Mrs. Stetson was asked if she objected to the stationing of four armed guards about the receiving vault in Mount Auburn Cemetery, Boston, where Mrs. Eddy's body lies, she answered, "Oh, not in the least. Do they not help to call the attention of the world to this spot, so tremendously important in this hour? These guards may themselves be witnesses to Mrs. Eddy's demonstration."

Asked if these views were shared by others, Mrs. Stetson replied:—"There are many, many Christian Scientists, now dazed and confounded, who will welcome this belief as the true light. My message will be of tremendous import to them."

APPENDIX N

The Death of Father Tyrrell

(Letter from Robert Dell to *The Times* of July 27th, 1909)

"Sir,—The circumstances which have attended the death and burial of Father Tyrrell should give food for reflection to many of us. Few of us who knew and loved him can regret that he was denied Roman Catholic burial. We know that he would not have recanted, even had he been able during his last illness to do so, and it is fitting that the Roman Church, which repudiated him in life, should repudiate him also in death, and thus proclaim to the world that he was true to the last to his conscience, the claims of which were more to him than those of any human obedience. We may be glad that he lies among honest men in a national churchyard. We may be grateful that the Church of England, to its lasting honour, has given a resting-place to a man of whom his own Church was not worthy, and has thus shown itself as least as Catholic in any but the merely geographical sense as the Church which claims the exclusive right to that title.

"But the fact that the Roman Church had no place for George

Tyrrell compels those of us who share his convictions and his hopes to ask ourselves whether that Church has any place for us. As I stood by his open grave in Storrington churchyard on Wednesday, I could not but feel that we too should be denied Roman Catholic sacraments, if we were as brave and as honest as he was. Have we the right to continue to avail ourselves of what was denied him without declaring as plainly and fearlessly as he did what we believe and to what we cannot submit ? If, after such a declaration, we are allowed to remain in communion with the Pope, so much the better. If not, which of us would not choose to be in communion with George Tyrrell and with all that is best and noblest in humanity rather than with Pius X. and the spies, informers and professors of mendacity by whose agency he governs his ' docile flock of sheep ' ?

" There is food for reflection also for the English people in these events. The old unreasoning hatred of Rome has given place in England to an equally unreasoning sentimentalism, which believes or affects to believe, that the spirit of Rome has changed, that the Roman Church is now content to share equal rights and liberties with other religious bodies, that the Papacy has ceased to be an obstacle to progress and a menace to liberty. These recent events should remind those who live in such illusions that the Roman Church is what it has been for centuries—a narrow and intolerant sect, acquiescing in religious liberty and equality only when and where it is not strong enough to demand privilege, refraining from physical persecution only because it has not the power to use it, but persecuting as ruthlessly as ever by all the means that are still in its power. The practical conclusion is not that we should persecute the Roman Church, but that the facts about its history and its present actions should be made as widely known as possible, that every legitimate means should be used to combat its influence in politics, in the Press, and in the schools of the nation.

" Here, before our eyes, is an example of intolerant fanaticism pursuing to his grave a man of the noblest character, whom nobody could know without loving and respecting him. Let us think of the characters of some of those whom the Roman Church has buried with all the pomp of her ceremonial, and then realise what ' orthodoxy ' means—that character and conduct count for nothing, and that the all important matters are the outward acceptance (even if it be insincere) of correct theological shibboleths and blind obedience to a despotic authority. As I have said, I do not regret the refusal of Roman Catholic burial to Father Tyrrell, but from their own point of view, how shocking is the action of the Roman authorities. For they believe, or profess to believe, that Roman Catholic burial is a matter of real importance—that its refusal has an effect on the future of the man to whom it is

refused. And they could so easily, since Father Tyrrell was incapable during his last illness of speaking for himself, have given him the benefit of the doubt, and that without the least surrender of principle. We have been officially informed, and there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the information, that Bishop Amigo could not, on his own responsibility, grant Roman Catholic burial, since Father Tyrrell's case was reserved to the Pope. But the Pope could have granted it, and the inference is that the refusal is his personal action—a characteristic action.

" Papal vindictiveness extends even to Father Tyrrell's friends. We have now the Abbé Brémond prohibited from saying Mass, and for what ? For the crime of saying a few prayers without any ceremonial, and without even the assumption of any ecclesiastical vestment or habit, over the grave of a friend. We may not even pray without the permission of Pius X. To this pitch has Papal despotism come, thanks in large measure to our own cowardice (I speak of those Catholics who regard the development of Papal despotism with dismay) and our acquiescence in every succeeding outrage of the authorities.

" In France, moreover, Father Tyrrell is being pursued beyond the grave by a campaign of mendacity in the Roman Catholic Press. The *Croix* stated, on the 24th inst., among other fictions, that Father Tyrrell said on his deathbed : ' Vous ne me ferez pas enterrer comme un chien.' From what source in England did this outrageous lie start to cross the Channel ?

" If the English people are not so sodden with amusement and frivolity—as I hope and believe that they are not—as to be indifferent to great issues, these events will open their eyes and stir their hearts to indignation; and July 21st, 1909, will be a black day in the history of the Roman Catholic Church in England." (Signed) ROBERT DELL, Paris, July 25th, 1909.

APPENDIX O

HUXLEY ON AGNOSTICISM

(A) *In reference to what an "agnostic" professes*

" MOREOVER, speaking for myself, and without impugning the right of any other person to use the term in another sense, I further say that Agnosticism is not properly described as a ' negative ' creed, nor indeed as a creed of any kind, except in so far as it expresses absolute faith in the validity of a principle, which is as much ethical as intellectual. This principle may be stated in various ways, but they all amount to this: that it is

wrong for a man to say that he is certain of the objective truth of any proposition unless he can produce evidence which logically justifies that certainty. This is what Agnosticism asserts; and, in my opinion, it is all that is essential to Agnosticism. That which Agnostics deny and repudiate, as immoral, is the contrary doctrine, that there are propositions which men ought to believe without logically satisfactory evidence; and that reprobation ought to attach to the profession of disbelief in such inadequately supported propositions. The justification of the Agnostic principle lies in the success which follows upon its application, whether in the field of natural, or in that of civil history; and in the fact that, so far as these topics are concerned, no sane man thinks of denying its validity." ("Essays," vol. v., p. 309.)

(B) *In reference to what an "agnostic" loses and gains*

"I am very well aware, as I suppose most thoughtful people are in these times, that the process of breaking away from old beliefs is extremely unpleasant; and I am much disposed to think that the encouragement, the consolation, and the peace afforded to earnest believers in even the worst forms of Christianity are of great practical advantage to them. What deductions must be made from this gain on the score of the harm done to the citizen by the ascetic other-worldliness of logical Christianity; to the ruler, by the hatred, malice and all uncharitableness of sectarian bigotry; to the legislator, by the spirit of exclusiveness and domination of those that count themselves pillars of orthodoxy; to the philosopher, by the restraints on the freedom of learning and teaching which every Church exercises, when it is strong enough; to the conscientious soul, by the introspective hunting after sins of the mint and cummin type, the fear of theological error, and the overwhelming terror of possible damnation, which have accompanied the Churches like their shadow, I need not now consider; but they are assuredly not small. If Agnostics lose heavily on one side, they gain a good deal on the other. People who talk about the comforts of belief appear to forget its discomforts; they ignore the fact that the Christianity of the Churches is something more than faith in the ideal personality of Jesus, which they create for themselves, *plus* so much as can be carried into practice, without disorganising civil society, of the maxims of the Sermon on the Mount. Trip in morals or in doctrine (especially in doctrine), without due repentance or retractation, or fail to get properly baptized before you die, and a plebiscite of the Christians of Europe, if they were true to their creeds, would affirm your everlasting damnation by an immense majority." ("Essays," vol. v., pp. 241, 242.)

APPENDIX P

The Stigmata of St. Francis

Some of the chief objections to believing in the stigmata were brought forward and discussed at some length by Hase in 1856 (Franz v. Assisi, Leipsic). They are shortly as follows :—

(1) St. Francis died on Saturday evening, and was buried Sunday morning.

(2) The body was enclosed in a coffin, contrary to Italian custom

(3) At the time of the removal of the saint's remains to the basilica, built in his honour, the body, wrested from the multitude, was so carefully hidden that for centuries its precise place has been unknown.

(4) The Bull of Canonization makes no mention of the stigmata.

(5) They were not admitted without a contest; and among those who refused belief in them were some bishops.

These difficulties are examined and plausibly explained, if not removed, by Paul Sabatier in an appendix to his "Life of St. Francis" (English Translation, Hodder & Stoughton, 1908); and his summary of the matter is well expressed in the following sentences (p. 442) :—" Thus the witnesses appear to me to maintain their integrity. We might have preferred them more simple and shorter; we could wish that they had reached us without details which awake all sorts of suspicions, but it is very seldom that a witness does not try to prove his affirmations and to prop them up by arguments which, though detestable, are appropriate to the vulgar audience to which he is speaking." And (p. 436) :—" This perfect congruity between the circumstances and the prodigy itself forms a moral proof whose value cannot be exaggerated."

At this distance of time it is impossible to decide for certain what was the reality underlying the belief in the stigmata; and it may well be that there was some real physical condition which gave rise to the belief, and that there is no occasion to attribute pious fraud to Brother Elias—who was in authority at the time of St. Francis' death, and who wrote the letter to the Order announcing his death and the existence of the stigmata—in relation to which Sabatier writes, " Such a claim might indeed be defended if these marks had been gaping wounds, as they are now, or in most cases have been represented to be; but the testimony agrees in describing them, with the exception of the mark on the side, as blackish, fleshy excrescences, like the heads of nails, and in the palms of the hands like the points of nails clinched by a hammer. There was no bloody exudation except at the side." (*Loc. cit.*, p. 434.)

But in view of the belief of the Middle Ages, not only in the miraculous in general, as repeatedly pointed out by Sabatier in the course of his work, but also in the possibility of stigmata in particular—for St. Francis was by no means the only saint said to have been blessed with such marks of divine approval,—the evidence for their existence would have to be exceptionally clear in order to bring conviction to an unbiassed mind.

It is for this reason that "moral proof" does not carry great weight; and, as a matter of fact, many of the accounts of the miracle are tainted by the wildest additions. Thus, Sabatier himself notes the following details (note on p. 442) :—

"Francis had particularly high breeches made for him to hide the wound in his side (Bonaventura, 201). At the moment of the apparition, which took place during the night, so great a light flooded the whole country that merchants lodging in the inns of Casentino saddled their beasts and set out on their way. (Fior. III. Consid.)"

It must also be borne in mind that St. Francis was seriously ill during the last year of his life, and that he had his forehead branded with hot irons by the surgeons whom he consulted for headache. It is possible that the wound in his side was due to some surgical treatment for pleural effusion, and that the marks on his hands and feet could also be given a very natural explanation if we knew all the facts. But there is no reliable evidence to be derived from hypnotic phenomena or mental disease which will justify us in thinking that, by concentrating his thoughts on the wounds of Christ, his mind was able to influence his body to this extent.

Therefore, while not denying the a priori possibility of any so-called miracle, I am decidedly of opinion that a desire on the part of his Order to accentuate the holiness of their founder, aided very probably by the existence of some natural scars or wounds, is the most probable explanation of the account which we have of the stigmata, especially when we consider that belief in the possibility of stigmata, like belief in incarnation, was far from uncommon at the time of St. Francis's death in 1226 A.D.

APPENDIX Q

The Mediumship of Mrs. Piper

Mrs. Piper's trance utterances and writings are admitted both by believers in spiritualism and by telepathists to form almost the most important part of the evidence on which they rely to support their respective hypotheses. Therefore I propose to discuss at considerable length what is the most probable explanation of the phenomena exhibited by her, especially as I have been

obliged in this book to discuss rather superficially much of the evidence for the supernormal. Moreover, I understand that Mrs. Piper has now lost the power of going into trances, or at any rate has ceased to give sittings, so that this is perhaps a particularly favourable moment for reviewing her mediumship.

I am dividing this essay into the following six sections: introduction and general considerations, objective fallacies, subjective fallacies, successes quoted in support of telepathy, conclusions, and verification of conclusions.

§ 1. Introduction.

In forming an opinion about Mrs. Piper, we must take into consideration not only the so-called supernormal character of her successes, but also her past history and the points in which she resembles other mediums; and therefore it is well to recall the origin of her mediumship. It will be remembered that Mrs. Piper was induced by a friend to visit a professional medium —in connection with an ailment from which she was suffering—in the year 1884, and that this medium professed to be "controlled" by a "spirit" calling himself a French physician with the name of Finné or Finnett. On the occasion of her second visit to this medium, she passed, to her own surprise, into a mediumistic trance condition, and thereafter was herself controlled by a variety of spirits ranging from an Indian girl named "Chlorine" to the poet Longfellow. Subsequently the French physician, now calling himself Phinuit, controlled her with increasing frequency, so that, when she first came under the observation of Prof. William James in the autumn of 1885, this spirit had become her regular control, though occasionally she impersonated spirits like the "late Mr. E." (Edmund Gurney) and Prof. James' aunt. (*See Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. vi., p. 656.) Phinuit remained the chief control till the autumn of 1896, when he was ousted—Mrs. Piper having undergone an operation earlier in that year—by some spirits calling themselves Imperator, Rector, etc. (the same names as those by which the Rev. Stainton Moses professed to be controlled), on the ostensible ground that in the delicate state of her health they were better influences for her than the energetic and erratic Phinuit.

Up till the year 1890, Mrs. Piper's "control" made statements wholly by word of mouth, but by 1892 her hand was the agency often employed for giving information. Between 1890 and 1905 Dr. Hodgson made the arrangements for Mrs. Piper's sittings, and introduced the sitter, we are told, usually under some pseudonym such as Smith. Some of the most interesting communications, and those which convinced Dr. Hodgson and Prof. Hyslop in particular of the need for some spiritualistic explanation of the

phenomena, took place in this period, while a spirit professing to be Dr. Hodgson himself has sometimes taken control since his death in 1905. But all these later sittings do not appear to me to have the importance of the earlier ones, because every year Mrs. Piper's trance-personality has been getting more practised in the art of telepathic mediumship (whatever the explanation of her powers may be), and moreover Mrs. Piper herself has been getting a greater grasp of the problem how to supply the type of evidence which her sitters want her to furnish in support of the "spiritualist hypothesis," both by means of an increasing acquaintance with psychic literature and with those engaged in psychic research, and also by means of hints and suggestions made by sitters to her (or rather to her "control") in the trance state. Consequently, for the purpose of trying to find out her methods of working—or what I may call the natural limitations of her power—the earlier sittings afford much the best material.

The reports on Mrs. Piper, published in the Proceedings of the American and English Societies for Psychical Research and elsewhere, are so numerous and lengthy that I have not attempted to make a detailed study of them all, partly because there is such a similarity running through them, and partly because Podmore, in his works "Modern Spiritualism" and "The Newer Spiritualism," has given such an excellent summary of the chief results, that, if one has mastered the details of one set of sittings, one can picture more or less accurately the conditions under which her so-called successes are obtained. The set of sittings to which I have given considerable attention are those reported in the sixth volume of the *Proceedings of the S.P.R.*, recording the results of her first visit to England, when she gave eighty-three sittings between the latter part of November, 1889, and February 3rd, 1890. I have chosen this set for the following reasons: (1) They are the earliest sittings I know, of which there are usually stenographic or sufficiently full reports to enable one to form a good opinion of the methods of her trance-personality; (2) Some of the sittings form a series in which it is possible to compare the results of a first with subsequent sittings, and at the same time a large number of first sittings are also reported; (3) We have the comments of such a variety of intelligent men on Mrs. Piper that it is extremely interesting to compare their verdict with what one knows or imagines to have been their bias on the subject of spiritualistic communications.

As regards the character of Mrs. Piper's mediumship in general, it showed affinities at first to the general character of spiritualistic mediumship existing in America at that time (1884), both in the type of "spirit" by whom she was controlled, and also in the nature of much of the information given, "spiritual" advice, medical diagnoses, etc. Similarly, in the next ten years the

trance-personality often made revelations about the state of the dead and the conditions obtaining in the spirit-world, but these do not show any originality, or throw any light on the subject beyond the ideas which Mrs. Piper may easily have formed for herself; in fact, they are precisely of the sort which characterise the revelations of the mediums who preceded her. Thus at a sitting in Sir O. Lodge's house on February 3rd, 1890, at which his friends, Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, were present, the "spirit" of the deceased Dr. Ted Thompson, who at a previous sitting had stated that writing was his chief employment in the spirit-world, now said, "We are never weary of praising and thanking God for our creation and preservation." Similarly, at a sitting on February 2nd, 1890, there was a good deal of conversation between Mr. Thompson and this dead brother, Dr. Ted Thompson, about the constitution of the spirit-world, as follows (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. vi., pp. 544, 545) :—

("The next portion, although wholly non-evidential, is printed as a specimen of the kind of conversation that often occurs if allowed.") *Mr. T.* : "How are you occupied?" *Control* : "My time is occupied in writing. It is difficult to explain, but whatever we break off in the body we can go on with. I write a great deal. I write often for others. We often help a poor fellow. You know there are people who commit suicide; they have taken their own life, and their spirits are sorely depressed for a time, but after a bit we are able to help them. That is my work, helping others and those who are weak. It is splendid here. Nothing to feed. You remember people used to eat. The material body is matter; that goes to dust, but we live on. God is very good to us all. It's a mistake not to believe in God." *Mr. T.* : "And Christ?" *Control* : "Do you know who Christ was? It's a great mystery, Ike. You know that we were taught He was the Son of God; well, He was a reflection of God, and we are a reflection of Him." *Mr. T.* : "Do you ever see Him?" *Control* : "Occasionally we do, but not often; He is far superior to us, infinitely superior." *Mr. T.* : "And to everybody?" *Control* : "Yes, to everybody. He is the real reflection, we are secondary reflections. Oh, I feel as if I wish I knew everybody. I am out of all aches and pains. I left you suddenly. Your sister has scores of children to teach. This place is divided up into parts. Here, on the earth, there is water between two countries; so there is a separation between the good and the bad side. Look here; if you took Susie's life, Susie would pass into the bright side in peace; afterwards you would not, but you would see her, and that would be your punishment. It's as when you look through a screen; you can see people, but they can't see you. Once lately a man broke through and came here, but two attendants took him back (p. 523). We never tire. There's no night, it's all day. I remember days and nights down with you. Ike, some day, I'll meet your hands outstretched and, if possible, I will come, if possible. My mother has caught cold. She's failing. Tell her I love her, love her still, and when she looks at my picture, as she often does, I stand and look at her and say, 'If you only knew how near I was to you.' Do you know where my watch and chain are?"

But whereas those mediums whose good faith is most open to doubt, either through their mediumship being associated with

physical phenomena or for some other reason, have been most successful in the reproduction of names and dates and definite facts which could easily be got up beforehand, Mrs. Piper's successes are of a very different sort, and—to quote Podmore—"she is weakest precisely where the pseudo-medium is most successful. Her real strength lies in describing the diseases, personal idiosyncrasies, thoughts, feelings, and character of the sitter and his friends; their loves, hates, quarrels, sympathies, and mutual relationships in general; trivial but significant incidents in their past histories, and the like. Not only is information on such points as these more difficult to acquire by normal means, but it is obviously much more difficult to retain in the memory.

"But if, in their general character, Mrs. Piper's trance utterances differ widely from those of Stainton Moses and Alexis Didier, both of whom, as we have already seen, are open, on quite other grounds, to strong suspicion of fraudulent practices, they bear, on the other hand, a strong resemblance to those of an earlier medium against whose good faith no suspicious circumstance has been alleged—Adéle Maginot, the somnambule employed by Alphonse Cahagnet. Like Mrs. Piper, Adéle Maginot appears to have been vague about names and dates, and sparing in her descriptions of scenery and the furniture of rooms. But in all that pertained to the emotional side of her interlocutors' reminiscences her information was frequently as copious as it was apparently accurate. She would describe in unmistakable terms the dress, personal appearance, physical and moral characteristics of persons whom in life she had certainly never seen, of whose existence she can hardly have been aware. The points of agreement between Adéle's revelations and Mrs. Piper's, and their marked differences from the outpourings of the common run of professional clairvoyants, seem too marked to be purely accidental." ("Modern Spiritualism," vol. ii., page 342.)

Therefore we may safely conclude that Mrs. Piper's mediumship, if not of the commonest type, is not an unique phenomenon, but must be considered as part of the problem of mediumship generally.

We are now ready to discuss the characteristics of Mrs. Piper's mediumship in detail, from which I think it is possible to come to some definite conclusions as to the source of her information. In the remarks that follow, it must throughout be remembered that at the time of her first visit to England at the end of 1889 *she had already had four to five years of practice as a medium.*

There are certain statements which may be made without any hesitation. *First:* Mrs. Piper's trance-personality has not got clairvoyant powers, as proved by her failure in all tests made for this purpose. Thus she never succeeded in saying what a

letter was about, the contents of which were unknown to the sitter—nine or more such failures are recorded in the sixth volume of the *Proc. S.P.R.* alone—and, similarly, experiments on the following lines were always a failure. Sir O. Lodge, in one of his earlier sittings, gave her a pill box, in which some letters chosen at random from a child's alphabet were enclosed, the letters in question being unknown to Sir O. Lodge himself. Phinuit, who was in control, made a definite statement what the letters were, a statement to which he adhered at a subsequent sitting, but which was so far from being correct that by chance alone he might easily have made a luckier guess. (See vol. vi., pp. 494, 495.)

Secondly, and similarly, the trance-personality has failed in all tests imposed to support the spiritualistic hypothesis, such as a test letter written just before her death by a Miss H. Wild (vol. vi., p. 657), and test questions put to the Hodgson control in America about his early life in Australia, about his cipher, etc. (vol. xxiii., p. 102). In fact, one may say there has been complete failure in answering test questions ; and the significance of this failure has often been accentuated by the method of trying to evade the question. A particularly noteworthy instance occurred in connection with the spirit of George Pelham, who was a conspicuous " control " between the years 1892 and 1896.

An account of this incident is given in Podmore's " The Newer Spiritualism " as follows (p. 182) : " Two test questions were put to G. P. at the sitting of March 30, 1892 :

1. What was the nature of the society formed by you and some other young people ? 2. What were the names of the members ? G. P. made two attempts—both incorrect—at the object of the society, and succeeded only in giving the Christian name of one of the members. At a later sitting he returned to the subject, and gave the full name (known apparently to the sitter) of this one member, but excused himself in the following terms from giving the other two names :

' I answered part of the question (the part he answered was correct), but did not give the names of the other two people, because it would be no test, because I told her (the sitter) the names of the other two in life, and, as she knows them, if I was to give the names in her presence, they would say it was thought-transference. No, I shall reserve the two names to tell Hodgson some time when he is alone with me, because *he* does not know them ' (all true). But the names subsequently given to Hodgson were incorrect."

Further, the evidence is strongly against the existence of any " spiritual " influence recognised by Mrs. Piper's trance-personality as a distinct entity. One of the best examples of this occurred in a sitting with Mrs. Herbert Leaf (introduced as Miss Thompson) at Mr. Walter Leaf's house on December 28th, 1889. Phinuit said Mrs. Leaf's mother had a sister Mary who was dead. Her name was really Agnes, and she was the same person from whom Phinuit had already given so many messages in Principal Rendall's

sitting at Sir O. Lodge's house in Liverpool on December 20th, 1889, and had then first called Alice, only getting the name Agnes right after a series of " fishing " guesses. Mr. Leaf, in reporting the sitting, makes the following note about the incident:—" It has a significant bearing on the spiritualistic explanation that there is no recognition here of the identity." (Vol. vi., p. 592.)

Thirdly : in striking contrast with her incorrect answers to test questions, the correct statements which the entranced Mrs. Piper makes—her so-called successes—may be said to consist, with a very few doubtful exceptions, of information *volunteered* by the trance-personality, relating to matters known either consciously or subconsciously to Mrs. Piper or her sitter. Some typical cases in point are the following: (1) At a sitting with Miss Emily C. on December 16th, 1889, Phinuit correctly, though rather vaguely, indicated the purport of a letter, the contents of which were known to the sitter. (See vol. vi., p. 636.) (2) At a sitting with Sir O. Lodge on December 21st, 1889, revelations were made by a " control," purporting to be the late Edmund Gurney, about his private affairs. Sir O. Lodge remarks in a note: " We had a long conversation, mainly non-evidential, but with a reference to some private matters which were said to be referred to as proof of identity, and which are well adapted to the purpose. They were absolutely unknown to me, but have been verified through a common friend." (Vol. vi., p. 493.) But, as a matter of fact, these revelations were within the knowledge of Mrs. Piper at that time, as we know from Sir Oliver Lodge's admission some years afterwards that the matters communicated had come out at a previous sitting and were therefore known to the trance-intelligence. (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. xxiii., p. 141.) (3) At a sitting with Sir O. Lodge on December 26th, 1889, Mrs. Piper's " control " attributed the blindness of an old uncle Jeremiah, then many years dead, to a fall. This statement corresponded to Sir O. Lodge's own idea, whereas the blindness, as a matter of fact, came on probably in connection with locomotor ataxia, or at any rate was not connected with any fall by another living uncle, named Robert, who was referred to for recollections of his brother. (See vol. vi., pp. 521, 528.) (4) At a sitting with Sir O. Lodge on February 2nd, 1890, Phinuit made several more or less correct statements about a friend, named George Wilson, but also said that he at one time thought of being a doctor. This was incorrect, but corresponded correctly to Sir O. Lodge's own impression of his friend's past history as indicated by his note on the incident:—" It is rather curious that, when this was said, I thought it correctly represented something I had been told by Mr. Wilson. I perceive now that it was quite wrong, and that I had been told something about farming. A great deal of this obviously looks like thought-transference " (pp. 539-542.) (5) The

statements about this Mr. Wilson may profitably be contrasted with statements made in the same group of sittings about Mr. Wilson's father, whom Sir O. Lodge did not know. (*See* pp. 535-550.) Here is an extract from a letter sent by Mr. Wilson to Sir O. Lodge about these statements made by the entranced Mrs. Piper :—" The statements made by the medium fall into two classes : 1. Those which relate to matters known to you. 2. Those you could not know—as, for example, either my present circumstances or my past life. What is said under the former head is, as you would see, more or less correct. What is said under the latter is entirely *in*correct. . . . And, in general, the kind of old man represented is the antipodes of the dignified, precise character of my father. . . ." (Vol. vi., p. 530.)

The first conclusion, then, which may be drawn from a study of Mrs. Piper's mediumship is that its explanation consists in some form of thought-transference. And it is interesting to note that the less biassed of her observers have all reached exactly the same conclusion. Thus, Mr. Walter Leaf writes :—

" On the whole, then, the effect which a careful study of all the reports of the English sittings has left in my mind is this: That Dr. Phinuit is only a name for Mrs. Piper's secondary personality, assuming the name and acting the part with the aptitude and consistency which is shown by secondary personalities in other known cases : that in the abnormal state there is a quite exceptional power of reading the contents of the minds of sitters, but that this power is far from complete. It gets only glimpses of what is stored up in the memory, and this without any clear distinction of that which is present to the mind at the time from the forgotten memories, if the phrase may be used, of the past. The stray hints thus caught may sometimes fall together into consistent groups, in which case we have a successful sitting ; or, and this is more usual, they may present themselves only as fragments. Phinuit is excessively desirous of impressing himself upon his hearers as a being of superhuman powers, and when he gets but fragmentary pictures, he does not hesitate to piece them together with guesswork often of the wildest kind. Sometimes he gets not even a glimpse of what the sitter's mind may be : he then has recourse to guessing pure and simple. In his guessing he shrewdly takes advantage of help afforded him by his sitters, throwing out general statements, and watching the effect they produce in order to guide himself. It is probable, but by no means certain, that he also gets help from muscle-reading, chiefly in the location of complaints. He takes advantage of any hints that may be thrown out, and attempts to dress them up as statements of his own, bringing them out after an interval in order that their real origin may be forgotten. In short, he omits no means of disguising his ignorance, even descending at times to downright denial of what he has just said in order to cover a blunder.

"It is unfortunate that the statements which he makes are rarely or never of such a nature as to admit even an approximate application of the doctrine of chances, especially as we have nothing like verbatim reports of most of the sittings, and the amount of fishing can only be estimated when the exact words are known " (vol. vi., p. 567).

The expression *thought-transference,* however, can cover a

variety of meanings; and this brings us to the heart of the problem,—to decide whether the sitter's thoughts are transferred with or without the help of Mrs. Piper's senses. In grappling with this problem, I must admit that Podmore has made out a plausible, if not conclusive, case for telepathy in his review of "cross-correspondences" in "The Newer Spiritualism," particularly in his explanation of the so-called "sevens incident" where the idea of the number seven appeared during the course of three months, (April-July, 1898,) in the script of six automatists, possibly inspired by the thought in the mind of the secretary of the S.P.R., Mr. Piddington, who had written and deposited a test letter with the S.P.R. in 1894 to be opened after his death. For this letter gave the number seven as a test, and contained instances of how the idea of seven could be reproduced, as well as Mr. Piddington's reason for selecting the word seven, which was "because seven has been a kind of tic with me ever since my early boyhood." Apparently clear cases of telepathy, however, have often been shown to be full of fallacies, so that the question needs very careful consideration before accepting the evidence as conclusive; and I shall only say here that, even if the evidence for the transmission of a simple idea like seven is superficially fairly good, the evidence for the telepathic transmission of definite statements, such as the names of people, is weak, and in the case of Mrs. Piper there is much to be said for an easier explanation of her so-called successes.

§ 2. Objective Fallacies.

[This section may be cursorily read by any one only moderately interested in psychical research, but should be carefully studied by others.]

The first point to be discussed is what I may call the trance-personality's technique. For the "control" but seldom volunteers a clear and unambiguous statement, and a condensed account of sittings with Mrs. Piper or a summary of her successes is apt to give a very false impression of her method of imparting information. In fact, before one can give telepathy as an explanation of her powers, one must be fully aware of the possibility of fallacies under the following heads: *Muscle-reading, Fishing, Guessing, Hints obtained in the sitting, Knowledge surreptitiously obtained, Knowledge acquired in the interval between sittings*, and lastly, *Facts already within Mrs. Piper's knowledge.*

(A) *Muscle-reading.*—A detail of the sitting, on which enough stress, to my mind, is never laid in reports of Mrs. Piper, is the fact that she holds her sitter's hand, often against her forehead. Thus I gather that holding hands was a feature of all the eighty-three sittings recorded in the sixth volume of the *Proceedings of the S.P.R.* But it is a method by which the trance-personality

might easily obtain information as to whether it was on the right scent, when subjects with emotional associations, such as the Christian names, characters and illnesses of relatives or friends, were in question, rather than dates, addresses, descriptions of houses, and similar concrete facts, in giving which Mrs. Piper was conspicuously unsuccessful. I could give a great many illustrations of the danger of this fallacy, but the following typical account of a sitting must suffice. It is written by a Mr. Lund, who appears to have had no bias in favour of the occult, for Phinuit* referred to him afterwards as a "hard" man.

Notes by T. W. M. Lund, M.A., Chaplain of the School for the Blind, Liverpool; dated April 26th, 1890.

"With regard to my experiences of Mrs. Piper, I do not feel that I saw enough to form data for any satisfactory conclusion. What impressed me most was the way in which she seemed to feel for information, rarely telling me anything of importance right off the reel, but carefully fishing, and then following up a lead. It seemed to me that when she got on a right tack, the nervous and uncontrollable movement of one's muscles gave her the signal that she was right and might steam ahead.

"In some points she was entirely out of it—*e.g.*, *carriage accident*—the *dangerous dark man—Joseph and Harriet*—and *especially*, my style of preaching. Nothing could be a more ludicrous caricature than this last.

"In others, which I will name, she made statements which singularly tallied with the truth—*e.g.*, my son *was* ill, and my wife was going to see him. I found that at the very time given she left the house with *a cloak on her arm, and brushed her dress* in the way imitated by Mrs. Piper.

"Still, I am bound to say, within earshot of Mrs. Piper—before the sitting—I told Mrs. Lodge of my son's illness in Manchester, and my wife's proposed visit to him, and Mrs. Lodge *addressed me by my name of Lund.*

"It is quite true that a carpet was recently burnt at our house; that my wife worries over her duties too much for comfort and health; that I live in a room full of MSS.

"But, without doubt, the feature of this sitting was the reference to my youngest sister, who died of diphtheria in my absence quite thirty years ago, and whose death was a heartaching sorrow of many years. Not only did she hit the name 'Maggie,' but even the pet name 'Margie,' which I had quite forgotten. However, the reason afterwards alleged for my absence at her death was quite wrong.

"I accepted the trance condition on Dr. Lodge's authority; otherwise I should have felt bound to test it.

"Altogether there was such a mixture of the true and false, the absurd and rational, the vulgar commonplace of the crafty fortune-teller with startling reality, that I have no theory to offer—merely the above facts. I should require much more evidence than I yet have, and with much more careful testing of it, to convince me: (1) that Mrs. Piper was

* It usually makes for clearness if one describes Mrs. Piper's secondary personality under the name of the spirit purporting to control her rather than under her own name. Accordingly I have inserted this explanatory note that the reader may understand the conditions, when extracts from conversations between Mrs. Piper's controls and her sitters are given in the following pages.

unconscious; (2) that there was any thought-reading beyond the clever guessing of a person trained in that sort of work; (3) that there was any ethereal communication with a spirit-world. I did not like the sudden weakness experienced when I pressed my supposed sister for the reason of my absence at her death, and the delay wanted for giving a reply.

"That the subject is full of interest I admit, and I should like to pursue it; but I am far from convinced at present that we have evidence on which to build a new theory." (*Proc., S.P.R.*, vol. vi., pp. 534, 535.)

(B) *Fishing.*—In the above account it will be noticed that the naming of his sister was the most successful feature of Mr. Lund's sitting, and from his description one would think that Phinuit gave her name straight away. But this was far from being the case as will be seen from the (more or less) verbatim report which runs as follows:—

"She (Mrs. Piper) said I was away when my youngest sister passed out; not with her; a long way off. No chance to see her. She had blue eyes and brown hair—a very pretty girl. Pretty mouth and teeth; plenty of expression in them. She then tried to find the name, *and went through a long list*" (the italics are mine); "at last said it had "ag" in the middle, and that's all she could find. She had changed a great deal. She was much younger, and had been in spirit a long time."

Mrs. P.: "But it's your sister—Maggie—that's it—she says you are brother Tom—no, her name's Margie. Too bad you were not at home—it was one of the sorrows that followed Tom all his life. (Correct.) He'll never forget it." I said: "Ask her how it was I wasn't there?" She said: "I'm getting weak now—*au revoir.*" (*Loc. cit.*, p. 534.)

Then again, it will be noticed that she knew Mr. Lund's Christian name, which she had previously discovered as follows:—

Mrs. P.: "Who is it you call Lira? the lady's sister (unknown), Lorina, Eleanor, Caterina, a sister, two names—one's Emma, a sister, connected with you through marriage? Do you know Thomas?" ("I'm Thomas," I replied.) "He'll know me—Thomas—Lon—Lund—Tom Lund. That's your sister that's saying it" (p. 533).

Her knowledge of his surname requires no further comment than Mr. Lund himself gives in italics in the above notes of his sitting.

These two examples of her method of fishing for Christian names are typical, but, as the process was often still more exaggerated, I am tempted to give one more illustration which is by no means atypical. It occurred in a sitting with Miss Alice Johnson (*loc. cit.*, p. 609):—

Phinuit: "Now, I will tell you about your family. You have a brother John." *A.J.* "No." (Could she by any chance have heard my eldest sister's nickname of "Johnnie"?) *Phin.*: "Well, then, James?" *A.J.*: "No. None of my brothers has a Christian name like that." (This was partly to see if she would take a hint as to the surname.) *Phin.*: "Jo, or Joseph. I know it begins with J. J-E-O-R, J-E-O-R-G-E, GEORGE. (Several efforts, to which I gradually assented.) I like him as well as any of them. (My eldest brother's name is George.) He is getting on as well as any—or better. (Not incorrect.) He is very nice. He gets on with people." (She identified him with the eldest brother before mentioned.)

Other subjects, however, besides names are characterised by fishing, and so it will be instructive if I give one more instance—this time of her *wonderful* skill in medical diagnosis—where her success was not surprising, seeing that Phinuit first said something was wrong with the throat, then altered the statement by saying it was a stammering kind of speech and all the time the sitter was assenting and leading him on. The illustration is taken from the same sitting with Miss Alice Johnson (*loc. cit.*, pp. 611, 612) :—

Phin. : " Your father is a dreamy sort of man—he often does not see things—because he is thinking his own thoughts. He does not notice—he is " (pausing for a word). *A. J.* : " Absent-minded ? " *Phin.* : " Yes—that's it—absent-minded. (This is not very correct.) Ah (feeling her cheek and jaw), there is a sort of numbness here. What is it ? Is he paralysed ? " *A. J.* : No—oh no—he is not paralysed." (Then she began to feel my face and under my chin, finally coming to the angle between the chin and throat). *Phin.* : " This is the place. There is a peculiar condition here." *A. J.* : " Do you mean in the throat, or further up in the mouth ? " *Phin.* : " Here (touching me quite at the top of the throat). Not quite in the throat—at the root of the tongue. (She wavered a little in the exact localisation of the part affected.) There is something curious about him in the top of his throat—when he talks it catches in his throat—at roots of tongue. Sometimes when he goes to say a thing he can't—then again, he can talk again as well as any one. Speech seems to be cut off for a moment —he stammers a little (she cleared her throat to illustrate how he did it). Sometimes this troubles him much—then he is not troubled at all." (This description seemed to me, and to all of my family, including my father, to whom I repeated it, to be remarkably good and accurate. During the description of my father's throat, I at first answered, " Oh," in a doubtful way, thinking of something else suggested to me by her first words and gestures. Then I saw this did not fit, and thought of the other thing, which she was really describing. I probably assented to her description at various points.)

(C). *Guessing.*—It is difficult to separate fishing from guessing, hence the previous paragraphs naturally lead up to this. Correct guesses, on the other hand, may easily be regarded as successful telepathic statements, and be claimed as proof of Mrs. Piper's supernormal powers. Consequently, it is difficult to give examples of correct guesses without incurring the appearance of bias in assuming telepathy was not the explanation. For the attitude of the more careful believers in the genuineness of the phenomena is well stated in the following expression of Prof. W. James' belief :—

" If thought-transference be the clue to be followed in interpreting Mrs. Piper's trance-utterances (and that, as far as my experience goes, is what, far more than any supramundane instillations, the phenomena *seem* on their face to be) we must admit that the 'transference' need not be of the conscious or even the unconscious thought of the sitter, but must often be of the thought of some person far away. Thus, on my mother-in-law's second visit to the medium she was told that one of her daughters was suffering from a severe pain in her back on that day. This altogether unusual occurrence, unknown to the sitter, proved to be true." (*Loc. cit.*, pp. 657-658.)

As Prof. James gives no details, and there are no notes of the sitting, it is difficult to assess the value of this incident, but it sounds as if the success might easily have been due to a lucky guess, just as it is not unreasonable to give guessing combined with fishing as the probable explanation of Phinuit's account of Miss Johnsons' father's throat. I am not yet ready, however, to discuss the question of the transmission of knowledge unknown, or only known subconsciously, to the sitter; and consequently, in this section, I shall try to select examples of no doubtful interpretation. (*a*) *Correct guesses.*—The statements in Mr. Lund's sitting (described above) about his wife's health and about a burnt carpet were probably lucky guesses, seeing that Phinuit was quite as often wrong as right in analogous statements of a general and probable nature, such as the worries of married life, the occurrence of a fire, etc. In this case, too, there was some little fishing, as will be seen from the fuller report (p. 533) :—

Phin. : " You had a fire a little time ago—no—a long time ago. Some little thing got burnt." (Right, a carpet.)

Ultimately she said it was a carpet, after calling it drapery and tapestry. *Phin.* : " Your lady had a pain in her back ; not very well ; it made her a little depressed ; tell her not to worry so, and don't be so devilish fussy. You tell her I like her. . . ."

Better examples, however, of a (more or less) correct guess are the following two incidents. The first occurred in a sitting with Prof. Richet, and was the sole success of a sitting characterised by " erreurs même très grossières et nombreuses." The following extract is from Prof. Richet's report (*loc. cit.*, pp. 619, 620) :—

" Comme elle parlait de chien, je lui ai demandé d'un petit chien que j'avais et qui est mort. Elle m'a dit sans hésiter *Pick*. Or, ce fait est bien important, et c'est, à mon sens, le meilleur résultat qu'elle ait donné ; car mon chien s'appelait *Dick* ; et il faut admettre qu'elle ne savait pas ce nom, inconnu à Cambridge comme à Boston.

" D'autres demandes sur le nombre des enfants ont été suivies d'absolu insuccès. Elle a dit successivement, 4-3-2-5-1, sans pouvoir dire le nombre exact, non plus les noms. . . .

" Pour être complet, je dois mentionner un fait curieux. Elle me dit, ' Vous avez des pilules dans votre poche,' et en les touchant avec le doigt, les palpant, et les épluchant—sans y goûter—elle dit hardiment et sans hésiter, ' C'est de la quinine ' ; ce qui est exact. L'expérience eût été bien plus intéressante s'il se fût agi d'autre chose de moins commun que la quinine.

" Bref, pour résumer ces faits, il n'y a dans mes expériences avec Madame Piper qu'un seul fait incontestable de lucidité : car je n'attache de valeur absolue qu'aux réponses faites à une question. C'est le nom de *Pick* pour *Dick* : alors que certainement rien ne pouvait lui indiquer. C'est le hasard ou bien la lucidité ; ce ne peut être autre chose.

" Quant à la bonne foi (consciente), elle est absolument certaine ; et pour tout observateur habitué à voir les somnambules, l'état de Madame Piper est tout-à-fait le même que l'état de somnambules en sommeil magnétiques, avec transformations de personalité."

It should perhaps be noted that quinine was one of the few drugs with which Mrs. Piper was acquainted, and that "Dr." Phinuit often prescribed it. The other illustration of (more or less) successful guessing is taken from a sitting on December 12th, 1889, with Mr. Walter Leaf, who describes the incident as follows (*loc. cit.*, pp. 633, 634) :—

"A message was given purporting to come from Edmund Gurney. In the course of it, I was told 'there are two letters, one about an appointment, one about an engagement.' I asked, 'What sort of engagement?' 'It is an engagement about work and studies. The letter is in a little drawer in the desk; look at it and read it over.' When this was said, I remembered that I had kept a letter written to me many years ago by Edmund Gurney, announcing his engagement to be married. This I knew would be in a certain drawer in my desk. On looking, I found that there were, in fact, two letters, both on the same subject, one of which I had forgotten. Neither of them was in connection with work or studies.

". . . Nothing in the sitting can be regarded as of any importance, as it is certainly within the range of successful guessing that I should have kept two letters from Edmund Gurney."

(*b*) *Incorrect guesses.*—The records abound with incorrect guesses, so that my difficulty is really that of choosing from a superfluity of material; but, in addition to the examples we already have had in Mr. Lund's sitting, I think the following four are fair samples. The first may well be compared with the quinine incident in Prof. Richet's sitting, as it is about a bottle of chemical, the contents of which were not known to the sitter (p. 510).

Phin. : "Ask me any questions." (Handed a bottle of unknown chemical, asking, "What's this?" *Phin.* : "It's strong. It's in pill form. It's got salicylate of soda in it. That's good for rheumatism. You had better not take it at all. Who prepared it? (Extracting cork and pinching bits to pieces in fingers.) Well, they had better prepare one more and die. There's a little bit of chincona in it, prepared with sugar. Don't you take it." (Wrong; it turned out to be sulphate of iron in wrapped-up bottle. It was purposely unknown.)

The next illustration records an incident to which Mr. W. Leaf drew attention, in his review of Mrs. Piper's mediumship, as follows (*loc. cit.*, p. 567) :—

"Several instructive instances point directly against any knowledge derived from the spirits of the dead. For instance, in Mrs. H. Leaf's first sitting a question was put about 'Harry,' whose messages Phinuit purported to be giving. 'Did he leave a wife?' No answer was given to this at the time, but in accordance with Phinuit's frequent practice the supposed hint was stored up for future use; and at Mrs. H. Leaf's next sitting she was told, 'Harry sends his love to his wife.' Now, as a matter of fact, Harry never was married."

The next example I take from two sittings, which a member of the Council of the S.P.R., a Mr. F., had with Mrs. Piper on December 11th and 12th, 1889 :—

The notes of the first sitting end with this paragraph, "In this sitting the most noticeable points are the exact location of the uncle's portrait

as a means of recalling him to the sitter's memory, and the singularly accurate statements about his (Mr. F.) past illness." Yet, in spite of Phinuit's supernormal insight into the affairs of this great uncle, we find the following paragraph in the second sitting, " But a description of my uncle William before referred to, and of his occupation, was almost wholly wrong; he was said to be a military officer in care of wounded men, whereas he was a quaker philanthropist. The performance was thoroughly unsatisfactory, and I gave my place to Miss C." (pp. 631, 632).

My last example is to show how Mrs. Piper practically always failed to guess difficult names, even with the aid of fishing. It is taken from the sitting with Miss Alice Johnson, previously quoted (p. 612) :—

Phin. : " I like your sister Eliza better than any of the girls. There is another who is musical, and another—whom you call Nellie—or Ellen." (My eldest sister Lucy is rather musical.) *A. J.* : " No." *Phin.* : " Well, then, Nettie or Kettie." *A. J.* : " No, not exactly." (My second sister is named Harriet, and always called Hatty.) *Phin.* : " Well, I can't tell what her name is—she is neither Eliza—nor the musical one. She uses a brush."

(*c*) *Partially correct guesses.*—I give two examples here of guesses, obviously prompted by the sitter's appearance, in order to lead up to the next heading of " *Knowledge obtained by hints.*" But even these guesses were only partially correct. The first example is taken from Prof. Alex. Macalister's sitting; the second from Miss Alice Johnson's.

Prof. Macalister says in his notes (p. 605), " Here I let Mrs. Piper see my inky finger." *Phin.* : " Do you write ? (" Yes "). I see paper before you. (" Can you tell me the subject of the writing ? ") You have been writing an article like a lecture; then you deliver it. I can't tell the time when you wrote it. (" What was the subject ? ") It looks like the medical world; the laws of habit and the way to live, and that sort of thing; literary work, the laws of science. I see lectures. Then there's a book. You want to write together. You ought to." (I have not written a lecture for three or four years.)

The incident with Miss Johnson should perhaps be prefaced with the remark that she wore spectacles, and that teaching is not an unlikely occupation at Cambridge (p. 610) :—

Mrs. Piper then began to talk about me, and I asked her if she knew what my employment was, or what subject I had studied. She said, " It is some kind of art—but learnt or got largely out of books. It is a sort of profession, such as doctoring is—like a doctor or a lawyer." *A. J.* : " Yes, hem ! " (Dubiously, at several points). *Phin.* : " You teach—ah, yes, that's it." (True.) *A. J.* : " What subject do I teach ? " *Phin.* : " It is not French or German. (She had ascertained at a very early stage in the conversation, by asking me, that I could not talk French, and did not know much of it.) Is it Greek or Latin ? " *A. J.* : " No." *Phin.* : " Then what is it ? Tell me." *A. J.* : " Natural Science."

(D). *Knowledge obtained (from hints) during the sitting.*—There are four main ways in which knowledge was sometimes conveyed

to Mrs. Piper during a sitting, and I propose to give illustrations of each. (*a*) *Family likeness, tone of voice*, etc., are as obviously likely to convey information as Prof. Macalister's inky finger. And so extreme care must be taken in assessing the value of information given to different members of the same family. Thus, a Mrs. A., on a visit to a sister, Mrs. B., at Cambridge, had a sitting on November 24th, 1889 (p. 581). Subsequently her other sisters, Mrs. B., Miss Gertrude C., and Miss Emily C., all had one or more sittings. Here is an extract from the report (which gives no verbatim details) of Miss Gertrude C.'s first sitting (p. 633) :—

"Miss C. was introduced as 'Miss Jones.' The sitting began with a repetition of various things, which had been already told to Mrs. A. and Mrs. B. Mrs. B.'s husband was mentioned by his Christian and surname, but the usual wrong description of his character was given. 'Gertrude' was mentioned by name, but apparently not identified at first with the sitter. Dr. Phinuit promised to give the name of Mrs. A.'s husband, but never did so."

Again, as Mrs. Piper had discovered the names of Mrs. A.'s sisters at the previous sittings with her and Mrs. B., it is not surprising that Miss Emily C. was recognised without fishing after her three other sisters had been accounted for. Thus the condensed report of Miss Emily C.'s first sitting begins (p. 635) :—

"Miss C. was introduced as Mrs. Robinson. Notes were taken by Dr. Myers.

Miss C. was immediately recognised by her Christian name, and told she had been polishing something shiny. Miss C. had that morning been polishing some photographic slides, a job which had been giving her a great deal of trouble and work.

Dr. Phinuit mentioned the Christian name of a friend which Miss C. recognised, and told some details which were partly true. He then mentioned all her brothers and sisters by name, as well as Mrs. B.'s husband. All these names had been previously given to the other sitters. He asked after Mrs. A.'s little boy, but not by name."

Other interesting extracts from the sitting are:—

". . . Messages were then given from Miss C.'s father and mother of the same import as those told to the other sitters.

. . . Dr. Myers spoke of Miss C. as Mrs. Robinson, a name which Phinuit indignantly repudiated. 'That lady's name is Emily. She is not Mrs.'"

This last sentence shows that Mrs. Piper was quite alive to the fact that sitters were introduced under pseudonyms, which did not deceive her.

Similarly, I consider it not surprising that the same topics were referred to at sittings with Prof. W. James' wife, her sister, and her mother; and, in my opinion, Prof. James shows bias when he says he believes Mrs. Piper can have had no clue as to the sitter's identity. This statement occurs in what I believe is the earliest report on Mrs. Piper (spring, 1886) and is therefore worth quoting, especially as it gives facts which support my contention that

sittings among blood-relatives are likely to be attended by successful results (*loc. cit.*, p. 652) :—

" I have myself witnessed a dozen of her trances, and have testimony at first hand from twenty-five sitters, all but one of whom were virtually introduced to Mrs. Piper by myself. [Note. I tried then, and have tried since, to get written accounts from these sitters, in most cases in vain. The few written statements which I have got are in Mr. Hodgson's hands, and will doubtless be sent you (Mr. F. W. H. Myers) with the rest of the material which he will submit.] Of five of the sittings we have *verbatim* stenographic reports. Twelve of the sitters, who in most cases sat singly, got nothing from the medium but unknown names or trivial talk. Four of these were members of the Society, and of their sittings *verbatim* reports were taken. Fifteen of the sitters were surprised at the communications they received, names and facts being mentioned at the first interview which it seemed improbable should have been known to the medium in a normal way. The probability that she possessed no clue as to the sitter's identity was, I believe, in each and all of these fifteen cases, sufficient. But of only one of them is there a stenographic report ; so that, unfortunately for the medium, the evidence in her favour is, although more abundant, less exact in quality than some of that which will be counted against her. Of these fifteen sitters, five, all ladies, were blood relatives, and two (I myself being one) were men connected by marriage with the family to which they belonged. Two other connections of the family are included in the twelve who got nothing. . . . I am persuaded of the medium's honesty, and of the genuineness of her trance ; and although at first disposed to think that the ' hits ' she made were either lucky coincidences, or the result of knowledge on her part of who the sitter was, and of his or her family affairs, I now believe her to be in possession of a power as yet unexplained."

(*b*) *Leading questions from the sitter and answers to Mrs. Piper's questions* form such an obvious source of information that a couple of illustrations out of a surfeit of material will suffice ; both are taken from sittings with Sir O. Lodge, on November 30th, 1889, and February 2nd, 1890, respectively (pp. 465, 541) :—

After some preliminaries. *Phin.* : " Have you anything to ask me ? " *O.L.* : (as instructed beforehand by F.W.H.M.), " Can you tell me about my relations ? " *Phin.* : " I get your mother's influence. She's very near to you, a good mother to you." *O.L.* (stupidly indicating the fact of decease) : " Yes, she was."

The second example contains a reference to the famous case of Sir Oliver Lodge's uncle Jerry, which is often quoted as the proof *par excellence* of telepathy, but which, to my mind, is full of fallacies, not the least being the ambiguous fishing way in which the information was given, and the fact that nothing really decisive was mentioned in the first sitting at which uncle Jerry's name came up, and that the case grew during the course of at least ten sittings :—

Phin. : " Here's Jerry again. Ask Frank if he remembers the shot-gun. And how we hid behind a dove-cot and shot peas through a fence at the neighbour's pigeons. He won't forget it. (Can't remember this.) And how we skated once, and he fell flat and got his seat all wet." (Very likely.)

O.L.: "Yes, I will. Uncle Frank remembered about the cat-killing. He says it was Charles that killed it." *Phin.*: (shouting) "Charles it was! Yes, that's right. It was Charles. I remember it perfectly. I had forgotten which one it was. And does he remember the Smiths?" *O.L.*: "He remembers the Smiths' field; not the boys. He remembers the field, and has written an account of it. I will read it." (Here read part of Uncle Frank's letter, printed on p. 526, which had arrived to-day.) *Phin.*: "Yes, that's it! I see it! I'm young again." *O.L.*: "He remembers also swimming the creek. I'll read that!" (Read.) (Medium shouted, laughed, and banged away at Nellie's knees as the reading proceeded. Specially excited at the mention of "Glenny's part.") *Phin.*: "I never expected to recall all that. It's delightful. You have given me much pleasure."

At the same time it must be recorded that sometimes Phinuit did not take advantage of the hints given, possibly because he was afraid that he was being purposely led on when hints were given too obviously. Thus the report of two sittings with a Mrs. Z., on January 27th and 28th, 1890, runs as follows (p. 646):—

"Mrs. Z., a lady who was mourning for a near relative, gave so many hints that Mr. Myers, in the course of taking notes, guessed much more of the facts than Phinuit succeeded in giving. Phinuit, as occasionally happened, seemed so obstinately bent upon some erroneous ideas of his own that he would pay no attention to Mrs. Z.'s leading questions."

The incident, at any rate, shows the danger of leading questions.

(*c*) *Useful hints, such as names, mentioned within hearing of the entranced Mrs. Piper,* were occasionally given. Thus the condensed report of a sitting with Mrs. H. Leaf begins as follows (p. 637):—

"This was a very confused and unsatisfactory sitting. The only right statement definitely made was that Mrs. Leaf had an aunt who married a Mr. Wood. She was told that her name was Rosie, but she had been called by this name before Dr. Phinuit as well as before Mrs. Piper. What was said about the lost bracelet (*see* p. 596) distinctly implied that it had been stolen by a servant; whereas it had been lost while Mrs. Leaf was walking in London with a friend."

There are not many examples of this fallacy in the reports of Volume VI. but the possibility of its unnoticed occurrence must always be borne in mind, considering the conditions under which sittings were usually held, *i.e.*, in private houses, with ladies present, and conducted by observers untrained in experimental psychology. The following incident from Mrs. A.'s sitting is a good illustration (p. 583):—

Phin.: "Your father is very much respected, and preaches to people as he did in the material world. Is there a girl of his called Eliza—no, Alice?" [Here Mr. Myers whispered to Mrs. A., "You have not a sister of that name?" Mrs. A. replied, "Yes, Alice Jane" (Mrs. B.). This may have been the means by which the second name Jane, presently given, was obtained.]

Dr. P. now obtained the name of the youngest sister, here called Gertrude, by four steps of gradual approximation. It is possible that he may have been somewhat helped by unconscious indication on the

part of the sitter. " Tell Gertrude to be brave and not get despondent with her burdens, and I will help her."

Phin. (or Mrs. A.'s father through Dr. P.): " Isabel made an unfortunate change; a year or two has elapsed since then. She has headaches which come from the stomach; go to her and ask her." (Wrong.)

" Jane, that is Alice Jane, my daughter. I see her playing the piano. Let her continue playing; she will accomplish her undertaking." (The last words have no recognised meaning. Mrs. B. was not playing the piano at the time.)

(*d*) *Objects given Mrs. Piper to hold* obviously helped her in certain cases. Thus in Miss Emily C.'s second sitting, Mrs. Piper correctly stated that a photo which she held against her forehead was a likeness of the late Edmund Gurney (whose features she knew), but failed to name the photo of another deceased friend of Mr. W. Leaf. The incident is given in a condensed report as follows (*loc. cit.*, p. 636) :—

" A photograph of Edmund Gurney was given to the medium, who pressed it against her forehead, front outwards, without looking at it, *so far as could be seen.* It was correctly recognised. Another photograph of a deceased friend of W.L.'s was then given to her, but she could make nothing of it."

The italics in the above report are mine, as the explanation of this " success " must lie between clairvoyance, telepathy, guessing and direct vision on the medium's part. Clairvoyance may be excluded for the reasons previously given; telepathy from the sitter is unlikely as she failed to name the second photo, and the chances against a correct guess are so enormous that an undetected glimpse of the photo by the entranced Mrs. Piper remains the most probable explanation.

Similarly, the famous case of Uncle Jerry was introduced in connection with a watch, which Sir O. Lodge got from his old (living) Uncle Robert for Mrs. Piper to hold. Among other information, supposed to be known to no living person, or at any rate to none of the sitters present, given by Phinuit or " Uncle Jerry," the following statement—I heard Prof. Barrett, in a lecture at Letchworth, mention this as a striking success—about nicks on the handle of the watch was made in the fourth sitting in which Uncle Jerry's " spirit " took part (p. 518) :—

Phin. : " Give me that watch (trying to open it). Here, open it. Take it out of its case. Jerry says he took his knife once and made some little marks up here with it, up here near the handle, near the ring, some little cuts in the watch. Look at it afterwards in a good light and you will see them." (There is a little engraved landscape in the place described, but some of the sky-lines have been cut unnecessarily deep, I think, apparently out of mischief or idleness. Certainly I knew nothing of this, and had never before had the watch out of its case.—O.J.L. *See also* p. 528.)

Page 528, to which we are referred, contains a letter from Uncle

Jerry's living brother Robert, which says, in reference to this watch :

" The marks on the watch I do not think were made by him, as I cannot remember his having a repeater until he lost his sight."

So these nicks apparently were not made by Uncle Jerry himself. Consequently the explanation of the medium's success lies between guessing, which in this case is not so improbable, and surreptitious investigation on Mrs. Piper's part, which is also not improbable, seeing that the watch had been in the house for a couple of days.

(*e*) *Knowledge obtained by the surreptitious use of her senses.* Surreptitious knowledge is a politer expression than deception, but undoubtedly the latter word might be used of some of Mrs. Piper's modes of obtaining information ; and this can consistently be admitted by those who believe in the honesty of the normal Mrs. Piper, as Podmore and some of her reporters have pointed out when dwelling on the non-moral nature of her trance-personality. The last two illustrations would be almost suitable for citing under this head, were it not that I can give some better examples. The first I propose to give is from a sitting at which Sir O. Lodge handed Mrs. Piper a chain, which had belonged to his friend's (Mr. Wilson's) father. The report of this incident runs as follows (*loc. cit.*, p. 535) :—

(Chain handed to Phinuit by O.L., the packet having been delivered by hand to O.L. late the previous evening. He had just opened the package, glanced at the contents, and hastily read a letter inside, then wrapped all up again and stored them. The chain had been sent by the friend whom it has been agreed to call George Wilson ; it had belonged to his father.) *Phin. :* " This belongs to an old gentleman that passed out of the body—a nice old man. I see something funny here, something the matter with heart, paralytic something. Give me the wrappers, all of them. (*i.e.*, The papers it came in ; a letter among them. Medium held them to top of her head, gradually flicking away the blank ones. She did not inspect them. She was all the while holding with her other hand Mr. Lund, who knew nothing whatever about the letter or the chain.) Who's dear Lodge ? Who's Poole, Toodle, Poodle ? Whatever does that mean ? " *O.L. :* " I haven't the least idea." *Phin. :* " Is there J.N.W. here ? Poole. Then there's Sefton. S-e-f-t-o-n. Pool, hair. Yours truly, J.N.W. That's it ; I send hair. Poole. J.N.W. Do you understand that ? " *O.L. :* " No, only partially." *Phin. :* " Who's Mildred, Milly ? something connected with it, and Alice ; and with him, too, I get Fanny. Here's his son's influence on it." (Note by O.L.—I found afterwards that the letter began, " Dear Dr. Lodge," contained the words, " Sefton Drive " and " Cook," so written as to look like Poole. It also said, " I send you some hair," and finished " yours sincerely, J.B.W." ; the " B " being not unlike an " N." The name of the sender was not mentioned in the letter.)

As Sir O. Lodge only *found afterwards* what the letter contained in detail, the explanation cannot be telepathy. The evidence, as we have seen, is all against Mrs. Piper having clairvoyant powers and consequently the only explanation left is the exceedingly.

probable surmise that the words given by Phinuit had caught Mrs. Piper's eye.

As the subject is of extreme importance, I feel I must give one more example. It will have been noticed that Mrs. Piper only gave the commoner Christian names by a process of fishing (except in cases where she had already obtained the information at previous sittings or through the indiscretions of sitters), and her inability to give difficult names at all was a marked feature on several occasions, such as "Hattie" in Miss Johnson's sitting already described, "Kellow" in Mr. Pye's sitting (p. 600), and "Christopher," which was the only uncommon name among Prof. Sidgwick's seven uncles all of whom she rightly named, with this exception, in the course of four sittings (pp. 615, 644). Consequently the fact that she gave the name of Miss Emily C.'s friend, "H. . . ." (a unique name), straight off without any hesitation is a very suspicious circumstance. The extract reporting this incident runs as follows (*loc. cit.*, p. 636) :—

Phin. : "You have a friend called H. . . ." (The name given is a very unusual one, probably unique as a Christian name. Miss C. had a note addressed to him in her muff, which was lying on the table. A clever conjurer could no doubt have taken an opportunity of seeing this.) Miss C. asked after another friend by name. Dr. Phinuit said he knew her, but described her personal appearance vaguely and not correctly.

(*f*) *Knowledge acquired in the interval between two, or more, sittings.*—That muscle-reading, fishing and guessing played the essential part in the only moderate success which Mrs. Piper attained in first sittings, is strongly supported, to my mind, by the striking fact that at subsequent sittings she sometimes brought out a surname without any hesitation—in marked contrast with the fishing employed to discover the Christian name at a previous sitting—when presumably, in the interval, she may have had opportunities of finding out something about her sitter or the "spirits" already referred to. Also most of her reporters, while proclaiming their belief in her honesty, admit the superior evidential value of a first sitting, presumably on the ground that before and between subsequent sittings hints may unconsciously have been given to the medium. Further, some of Mrs. Piper's most signal successes have taken several sittings to "crystallize," so that pronounced believers in telepathy, like Sir O. Lodge, insist on the need of a series of—or at least two—sittings to get successful results (see p. 532). Consequently it is rather an important matter to point out that, whether Mrs. Piper acquires information between sittings by her own conscious efforts or only by hints unconsciously given, there is a great deal of evidence to show that she does acquire such information. Thus, in the sixth volume of the *S.P.R. Proceedings* I find that on at

least *fourteen* occasions she gave information at a second or subsequent sitting, which she had not succeeded in giving at the first sitting. More often than not the information in question related to the name of a relative of the sitter, but sometimes it had reference to other matters. Two of the best examples, which I could give by way of illustration, took place in sittings with Sir O. Lodge. One had reference to the names of Lady Lodge's father and stepfather (*see* pp. 466, 468, 470, 472, 474, 493 and 504); the other to the inscription on a snuff-box which had belonged to Uncle Jerry (*see* pp. 537, 541, 549.)

The snuff-box was first introduced at a sitting with Sir O. Lodge on the evening of February 1st, 1890, when Phinuit (or Uncle Jerry) made the following remarks about it (p. 537) :—

[Here I (Sir O. Lodge) gave him a snuff-box that had come that morning from a lawyer in London by parcel post.] *Phin.* : "A gentleman sent you this. What's it got to do with the chain ?" *O.L.* "Nothing." *Phin.* : "Oh, well, you know Tom, connected with this. It's very curious, but do you know that uncle of yours turns up over this, the one in the body ? His influence is all over it ; he must have handled it. Your uncle in the body must have sent it you." *O.L.* : "Well, he got it sent." *Phin.* : "Yes, it's got his influence, but in connection with the other uncle. It comes from the same uncle. It belonged to Uncle Jerry." *O.L.* : "Quite right." *Phin.* : "That's his. A little case it used to have. (Don't know, but as it was a presentation, it is probable.) He got it through Robert somehow. Thinks Robert gave it him. A powder box, isn't it ?" *O.L.* : "A snuff-box." *Phin.* : "Yes, a powder box. It's been in Robert's possession. It belonged to Uncle Jerry years ago, very long ago, he can hardly remember it. (Feeling it.) Has it got a glass top ?—a glazed top ?" *O.L.* : "No, it's metal, but it's polished." *Phin.* : "Glazed. Well, he just remembers it. I'll ask him all about it. What else do you want ?"

At the next sitting, on the morning of February 2nd, Phinuit was unable to say what the inscription on the snuff-box was about. Thus the report runs (*loc. cit.*, p. 541) :—

Phin. : "Robert. Who is Helen ? That's the one who gave you the snuff-box. It was Jerry's ; there are letters upon it, my letters." *O.L.* : "Yes, an inscription." (*See also* pp. 537 and 549.) *Phin.* : "I remember it faintly. Oliver remembers that too. It was given to me by some friend of mine. I will try and remember about it. But it's not easy to bring back these little things. I have very important things to do. We all have."

Nevertheless, at the next sitting but one, on the morning of February 3rd, Phinuit knew some facts in Uncle Jerry's early life, which were indicated in the inscription (p. 549) :—

Phin. : "'Ullo, here's Jerry. Aunt Anne has been to fetch him. See what good the ring is. Look here, Oliver. I have been trying to remember about this box ; it seems to me that before I went into insurance, I used to teach, and that this was given me by my pupils." (Correct ; it was given him by the boys of the Lucton Grammar school, where, in early life, he was mathematical master. An inscription on it in small character asserts the fact. See also p. 541.) *O.L.* : "Yes,

that's so. Do you know where it was that you used to teach?" *U. J.:* "No, it's so long ago. How long have I been here? It must have been twenty or thirty years." *O. L.* "Yes, fully twenty years." *U. J.:* "And that was given me long before that." *O. L.* "I will tell you when it was given you. It is dated 1836, and now it's 1890. Fifty-four years." *U. J.:* "Yes, that's a long time. Tell me where it was?" *O. L.:* "It was Lucton." *U. J.:* "Oh, oh, yes. Yes, I used to teach there, and it was given me by the boys. It has been a tremendous job to remember it."

I must also give one more example of Mrs. Piper's "successes" illustrating the subsequent discovery of a name. The following incident has reference to the names of Lady Lodge's father and stepfather, but is a little too long for complete reproduction, as the information only gradually assumed definite shape in the course of several sittings. However, I shall omit nothing important.

In Sir O. Lodge's very first sitting with Mrs. Piper, on November 30th, 1889 (in Mr. F. W. Myers' house), Phinuit discovered the names (fishing being a marked feature) of many of Sir O. Lodge's relatives, but did not mention Lady Lodge's name or that of her father or stepfather, unless the following cryptic reference applied to some of them (p. 466):—

Phin.: "Do you know Margaret?" *O. L.* "No." *Phin.:* "This is your wife's aunt—name not quite Margaret—M-A-R. Mary, that's the name. She is a near relation of your wife." *O. L.:* "Don't know her." *Phin.:* "There is an uncle William belongs to the lady whose name I was trying to get. He is in the spirit. The aunt is in the body. She has a sister in the spirit who passed out years ago." *O. L.:* "Very likely. Don't know." (Note.—This William and Mary episode meets with a probable explanation further on.)

and again later, in the same sitting (p. 468):—

Phin.: "Do you know uncle William?" *O. L.:* "No." *Phin.:* "I like that influence—a nice influence that—serious—rather depressed." *O. L.:* "No, I don't know whom you mean." (This Uncle William was mentioned before—see above—and not understood by me, and to the only Uncle William of my wife's the description now given does not at all apply. But on mentioning it to her, she recognised the Aunt Mary and Uncle William as her mother and stepfather—the latter having adopted her from childhood, and become very fond of her and her children, and to him the description applies exactly; except, of course, the kinship erroneously mentioned. Phinuit corrected this himself at a later sitting, pp. 474, 493, and subsequently gave his full name. Page 504.)

At the next sitting—on December 19th, 1889, at Sir O. Lodge's own house—when Lady Lodge was also present, Phinuit said that Lady Lodge's name was Marie—(it was Mary)—that her mother's name was Mary, and that her father's name was Alexander (after a great deal of fishing); and, towards the end of the sitting, he turned Uncle William into Lady Lodge's stepfather as follows (*loc. cit.*, p. 474):—

O. L.: "Tell me about Uncle William you mentioned last time" (pp. 466, 468, and 470). *Phin.:* "He belongs to that lady and to her

mother. He's her father, too." *Mrs. Lodge :* "Tell me about him." *Phin. :* "Never saw a spirit so happy and contented. He was depressed in life—had the blues like old Harry, but he's quite contented now. It's a damn sight better here. He had trouble here (prodding himself in the lower part of stomach, and afterwards me over bladder). Trouble there, in bowels or something. I feel pain all here. Had pain in head, right eye funny (touched right eye). Pain down here, too (abdomen again), stoppage urine ; had an operation, and after that it was worse, more inflammation, and with it he passed out. He wasn't happy in life. He had nausea and was misunderstood. He had ideas that he didn't express. It's damned hard lines on a man to be misunderstood." (Getting weak and rambling, soon after went.) (The step-father to whom this refers used to have severe fits of depression, more than ordinary blues. His right eye had a droop in it. He had stone in bladder, great trouble with urine, and was operated on towards the end by Sir Henry Thompson. He was a very silent, religious man.) (*See also* p. 504.)

By December 21st (after three sittings in the interval), Phinuit had discovered that Lady Lodge's father's surname was Marshall, but had not yet discovered the surname of her stepfather. The way in which the father's surname, Marshall, was brought out without any hesitation may be profitably contrasted with the conspicuous fishing that marked the previous discovery of his Christian name Alexander. The report runs as follows (*loc. cit.*, p. 493) :—

Sitting No. 40. Saturday evening, 7 p.m., December 21st, 1889. Present : O. J. L. alone, taking notes himself. (I sat to Mrs. Piper with my hands crossed, so that after the trance came on it was my right hand that was released and left hand kept ; I was thus able to take rough notes.) *Phin. :* "That man's father's name was Thomas ; both Thomas. . . . (and so on, as reported and annotated as appendix to previous sitting, p. 490). Mary's father used to be on board ship, and he fell and hurt his leg. Fell through a hole in the boat. (Correct.) Can't remember where he got that article. It was on one of his voyages ; but Mary may remember. (Does not.) Her second father is William ; that is the one with the white head. The first one was Alexander Marshall." (All correct. This is the first appearance of the surname ; it came quite pat. *See also* p. 472.)

By December 24th (after three sittings in the interval), Phinuit had discovered the surname of the stepfather, which he gave without hesitation as follows (p. 504) :—

Phin. : "Who is Jack? Will you tell me who that is? James (spelling it), that is your (? wife's) cousin." *O.L.* "I don't know." *Phin. :* "But you have always said you did not know him. Now I think you are stupid. Why don't you know ? this cousin of hers is bound to make himself known. Here is William T-O-M-K-I-N-S-O-N. Yes, that is right. William Tomkinson. He is an old man, with white hair and beard, and he has nothing here (moustache). He passed out with trouble with the bladder." (All correct. *See* pp. 474, 476.)

(*g*) *Facts within Mrs. Piper's knowledge.*—The last question we have to consider is how far the information in certain cases may have been known to Mrs. Piper either consciously or sub-

consciously, for the excellence of Phinuit's memory is attested by Prof. James in the following words (*loc. cit.*, p. 655):—

"The most remarkable thing about the Phinuit personality seems to me the extraordinary tenacity and minuteness of his memory. The medium has been visited by many hundreds of sitters, half of them perhaps being strangers who have come but once. To each Phinuit gives an hour full of disconnected fragments of talk about persons, living, dead or imaginary, and events past, future, or unreal. What normal waking memory could keep this chaotic mass of stuff together? Yet Phinuit does so; for the chances seem to be that if a sitter should go back after years of interval, the medium, when once entranced, would recall the minutest incidents of the earlier interview, and begin by recapitulating much of what had been said. So far as I can discover, Mrs. Piper's waking-memory is not remarkable, and the whole constitution of her trance-memory is something which I am at a loss to understand."

The fallacies under this head may be sub-divided into the following groups: (*a*) *Information acquired at previous sittings.*—I have already given an illustration of this in the incident where the spirit of Edmund Gurney gave Sir O. Lodge some information as a test, which had already, unknown to Sir O. Lodge, been mentioned at a previous sitting. There can be no doubt, I think, that the entranced Mrs. Piper acquired a great deal of information from her sitters, of which she made future use; for experimenters like Sir O. Lodge carried on regular conversations with the "control," explaining the sort of evidence they wanted, to establish telepathy or the spiritualistic hypothesis: for example (p. 542):—

Phin.: "Oh, Marie! Wait a bit, Marie. You won't mind, will you? There's a gentleman here specially wants to speak, Mr. Wilson. How do you do, Mr. L.?—" *O.L.* "Lodge my name is." *Mr. W.:* "How do you do, Mr. Lodge? I know you a little better now. I have met a friend of yours, an uncle, I think; also a friend of your father's—your father in fact. I have been talking to them. I shall be able to help in this work. Tell me why you want to know about me." *O.L.:* "Well, sir, your son, being interested in what I told him, wanted greatly to come and see you if he could, but he couldn't just now. So, as next best, he entrusted me with your chain, and asked me to get messages for him, especially concerning things that I do not know." *Mr. W.:* "Why about things you don't know?" *O.L.:* "Well, because if I knew things, it would seem as if I had somehow impressed them from my mind upon that of the medium, instead of their having come direct from you, and this would be no evidence of your existence." *Mr. W.:* "I see your idea; but what do you mean by the medium? That woman I saw just now?" *O.L.:* "Yes." *Mr. W.:* "Well, do you know, I am a very happy man. I have had the power often of seeing my son, and I have watched his course with great interest, but I did not know I could speak. I am grateful to you for helping me to speak. . . ."

[Then follows half a page of statements which were supposed to be evidential of the spirit's identity, but which were wrong or unintelligible.]

O.L.: "I will send this to your son. You speak of having seen him.

Did he ever know of it?" *Mr. W.*: "I have been to see him. I have come very close, and he has thought he heard me." (He has had feelings of the kind.) *O.L.*: "How did he hear you?" *Mr. W.* "Once he was in bed, and I rustled the drapery. He thought he heard me. He feels sometimes as if I was very near him, and at those times I am near him. I should not have been here but for this chain. A dear boy George is. I have got another boy with me. How is Mr. Bradley?" *O.L.*: "Pretty well, but surely you didn't know him?" etc.

(*b*) *Conversation and reading in the houses of her hosts.*—Mrs. Piper is generally represented in the writings of telepathists as a simple-minded person, almost incapable of taking an interest in problems of philosophy; but it is clear to my mind that if her memory stored what she overheard, she must have had great opportunities while she was visiting her patrons for getting information. That she read psychical literature, we know from a short sentence in Prof. Richet's report on Mrs. Piper (p. 619):—

"Elle a fréquenté pendant deux ans Mr. William James et Mr. Hodgson, et a lu les *Proceedings* de la Société Americaine de Recherches Psychiques."

Under this heading may be included information obtained from children, and in the particular case of Sir O. Lodge's friends and neighbours, the Thompsons, I have no doubt she picked up many hints. Thus, in estimating the value of statements made about the Thompson's affairs, the following extract from the introduction to Mr. Thompson's first sitting should be borne in mind (p. 507):—

The next sitting was the first with our neighbours the Thompsons. Mrs. Piper had been introduced to them a day or two before, and liked them particularly; they are too near neighbours to attempt making strangers of. Their children also she had seen more or less, though no other relatives."

On one occasion, it is perfectly clear, I think, that Phinuit made use of knowledge obtained by Mrs. Piper in this way. The incident, referring to a lost paint-box, runs as follows (*loc. cit.*, p. 546):—

Phin.: "Ullo! How are you, Thompson, and you, you little miss? You've got headaches. Have you had that sage tea yet?" *Miss T.*: "No." *Phin.*: "Well, you're a stupid lot. Why don't you take it, and what are you fretting about? worrying, thinking you've lost something. What have you lost?" *Miss T.*: "Oh, a paint-box." *Phin.*: "It's not lost at all. You will find it in a drawer on the left-hand side—in a drawer. Go upstairs and right, left, right." *Miss T.*: "Tell me again." *Phin.*: "Well, you go in at the front, then you turn to the right and go upstairs, then you go to the right, and then to the left, then on to the right, and on the left-hand side." *Miss T.*: "A bedroom?" *Phin.*: "No, not quite right." *Miss T.*: "It must be the school-room?" *Phin.*: "That's it. It's not a drawer, but quite like a drawer. Not a desk, but like a desk. Well, it's there, in left-hand drawer among some papers. Your uncle told me that. Go and find it when you get back. It's not lost at all." (The description applies exactly to the place it is usually kept in, but it is not there now.)

And there is no reason for doubting that Mrs. Piper had observed the place where Miss T. was in the habit of keeping her paint-box.

(*c*) *Information derived from letters and documents.*—Though I have not found any incidents so definitely proving the existence of this source of information as in the case of a rather similar type of medium, Mrs. Thompson (*see* Podmore's "The Newer Spiritualism" pp. 157-160), yet there are a few indications that Mrs. Piper may have used the opportunity of reading letters; and where this was feasible, I do not think it would be an improbable surmise in discussing the possible explanations of the few really good incidents which at first sight seem to support telepathy.

(*d*) *Information derived from photos and like objects.*—Two examples from sittings with Sir O. Lodge will be sufficient to illustrate this source of information. Thus a sitting on December 20th, 1889, was characterised by precise descriptions of Sir O. Lodge's mother and Lady Lodge's stepfather, both given without hesitation; but the evidential value of this for telepathy is completely destroyed by the following sentence from the introduction to the sitting (p. 475) :—

"It must be stated, with reference to the precise description of my mother and my wife's stepfather, that Mrs. Piper had seen photographs of both the night before."

Again, the incident of Uncle Jerry's photo is a good illustration. The original reference occurred in the sitting of December 24th, 1889, at which Uncle Jerry's watch was first given Mrs. Piper to hold (before Phinuit had discovered by a great deal of fishing and guessing the name of the owner of the watch) as follows (*loc. cit.*, p. 503) :—

Phin. : "He thinks everything of Uncle Robert, and he was with him in the same business. They started out together, and then he gave it up and came here. What do you think of that? It is true. He and your Uncle Robert had their pictures taken together. He had his hat on. A long while ago. Had it taken in tin. Little bit of paper pasted on the . . . He was sitting down. The other standing up. Tall hats on. Well, there, he remembers that. (*See* Note B.) And Uncle Robert owns this (watch), and he left it with him." *Note B.*— "The facts concerning the photographs are these: There are two framed photographs of Uncle Jerry, and both these I remember having often seen. A print of one of them is in the house, and hence Mrs. Piper may have possibly seen it; but it is an ugly thing, relegated to some attic. I suppose it belongs to the early days of amateur photography. It consists of a gate in the middle of some iron railings, and standing by each gatepost is a man in a tall hat. One of these men is Uncle Jerry, the other is not Uncle Robert, but a friend of both, the late Major Cheere. I thought at the time that it was the much more intimate friend of both, Mr. Robert Cheere. The other photograph referred to is a better one; I have since had it sent me from London. In it Uncle Jerry is sitting down blind on a garden seat, probably at Mr. Cheere's, and near him is sitting a son of one of the gardeners, to whom he is giving a lesson in algebra.

"The mention made by Phinuit is ambiguous as to whether it refers

to two pictures with figures in different attitudes in each, or whether it means one picture with two figures in different attitudes. My impression at the time was the latter, and my conscious memory was not able to correct this. But they are shortly afterwards, and again later on, spoken of in the plural, showing that two pictures were really meant." (P. 531).

There was also another reference in a much later sitting, on February 3rd, 1890, to the friend who was photographed along with Uncle Jerry, showing that Phinuit had been unable to discover who he was, and well indicating the way in which a sitting was often conducted (p. 550) :—

Uncle Jerry : " Do you know, Oliver, I can't remember the friend who was photographed with me that you say is Robert something." *O.L. :* " No. Shall I tell you ? " *U. J. :* " Well, what do you think ? Had you better ? " *O.L. :* " I fear you won't remember it in time now." *U. J. :* " What do you think, Nelly ? " *Miss Lodge* (who was present) : " Yes, you would like to know it now." *O.L. :* " It was Robert Cheere." (I find, later, that this is wrong: it was another member of the same family.) *U. J. :* " Oh ! Oh, Lord ! Oh ! Ah well ! (pause) Do you know where he is ? " *O.L. :* " No." *U. J. :* " Well, he's here."

(*e*) *Names mentioned in Mrs. Piper's presence; introductions, etc.* —Two examples out of many must suffice ; both are recorded by Mr. Walter Leaf. Thus he says, on p. 560 :—

" Dr. Phinuit makes many statements which may easily have been learnt by Mrs. Piper ; he, in several cases, for instance, took pains to describe the personal appearance of his sitters. On the other hand, knowledge about them and their surroundings, which Mrs. Piper certainly possessed, was not as a rule given by Phinuit. It may, of course, be said that this was done in order to obscure his methods, and I am inclined, judging from what I have seen of the character of Phinuit, his shrewdness and his desire to appear marvellous, to think that this is very possible ; though it seems somewhat inconsistent with the different course taken by him in the cases just mentioned, and still more with his habit of noting corrections or hints given him during a sitting, and attempting to bring them out after a short interval as if they were his own. One observation bearing on this point was made by Mrs. Verrall. In her three sittings her eldest girl was frequently mentioned, but her name, which she had never mentioned to Mrs. Piper, was not given. After her last sitting—No. 63—she purposely took an opportunity of calling the child ' Helen ' in Mrs. Piper's presence. At the very next sitting where Mrs. Verrall was mentioned, that of Mrs. B., No. 66, Helen was named by Dr. Phinuit."

The other example has reference to Mr. W. Leaf's father. At a sitting with Mr. W. Leaf, on December 12th, 1889, Phinuit had made the following statements, given in the condensed report by Mr. Leaf as follows (p. 633) :—

" I was wrongly told that I had two brothers. One was said to suffer from headaches through the temples. This I denied at the time, but afterwards found was correct. The other was said to have died long ago. This is quite wrong ; I never had a second brother. I was rightly told that I had no sisters. I was told that there was William, whose influence was round me. This is true, as I have had a grandfather,

an uncle, and two cousins of that name. In a later sitting, William was said to be my father, which is wrong."

The last sentence refers to a sitting with Mrs. H. Leaf on December 28th (Mr. W. Leaf reporting), when the following statements were made (p. 591) :—

Mrs. L. : " Can you tell me about my brothers ? " *Phin. :* " I get you a little mixed up with Walter. Does William belong to you or to him ? " *Mr. W. L. :* " There is one William that belongs to me. You told us." *Phin. :* " Well, you have got a William on the father's side. That's the father's brother ; and he (W.L.) has got the father. He is a little older than his (W.L.'s) father. He has got a William in the spirit that is his father, at least, he says father to me ; that is all I can hear from him. There's two Walters in his family ; then there is William, who is father in some way to him. Then with you I get George, G-E-O-R-G-E. I like him ; he is in the body, and there is one in the spirit. He has got a brother in the spirit, he wants to send his love to him." (Mrs. H. L. has an uncle William, her father's brother, and a cousin George who has lost a brother, the " Harry " who is named shortly afterwards. It is also correct that there are two Walters in my family, as I have an uncle of that name. Note the correction, that William is my father, of the statement which had been made to me at my previous sitting. Mrs. Piper had, in the interval, learnt by personal introduction that my father is not in the spirit, and may probably have found out that his name is not William.—W. L.)

Lastly, in a sitting on December 31st with Messrs. W. and H. Leaf, their father's name is corrected to Charles—thus (p. 639) :—

Phin. : " You (Mr. H. Leaf) are Rosie's gentleman, what you call her husband. There is a Charles about you. I get the same influence with both of you. Why, you are brothers. Walter, this is the one I told you about that had the pain in his head (indicates right temple). It is a sort of neuralgia. Charles must be your father. Walter, I thought that William was your father till I got this other influence, but now I see that Charles is your father and William is your grandfather, your father's father. . . ." (Mrs. Piper had had opportunities of learning that our father's name was Charles, as she had been introduced to him in the flesh some days before. . . .—W.L.)

(*f*) *Spoilt anonymity of sitter.*—This source of information is very similar to the last, except that it arises as the result of carelessness. Thus the condensed report of Miss X.'s second sitting, on December 9th, 1889, begins as follows (p 630) :—

" Prof. Charles Richet and Walter Leaf were also present ; the latter only for a few minutes at the beginning. He was at once called Walter when the trance came on, but the evidential value of this is diminished by the fact that Mr. Myers had accidentally used his surname in the medium's presence before the trance."

I find similar examples of spoilt anonymity on at least *five* other occasions recorded in Volume VI. alone (*see* pp. 481, 495, 532, 596, and 637) ; and consequently, whenever writers on telepathy assume that Mrs. Piper cannot have known her sitter's name, owing to their having been introduced under a pseudonym —as in the following note on p. 182 of " The Newer Spiritualism,"

" The reason for publishing the accounts of first sittings only is that

at each successive séance the medium has more and more opportunities for acquiring by normal means knowledge of the sitter and his affairs. As every sitter was introduced under a pseudonym, generally Smith, the only chance of obtaining information by such means at a first sitting would be by various processes of 'fishing,' or skilful inferences from unguarded admissions in the course of the séance, and the report of the proceedings, of course, shows how far such methods were actually employed "—

this fact must be borne in mind. For it is not unfair to assume the possibility of such an accident having occurred without attracting the attention of the reporters of the sitting, seeing that they were nearly always untrained in experimental psychology. I do not suggest that their bias ever led them to suppress the fact of spoilt anonymity, when they knew it, for they were mostly men trained in other fields of research; but an eminent physicist, like Sir Oliver Lodge, does not seem to have realised how such an accident absolutely impairs the value of an experiment in telepathy, when he could write, by way of introduction to the first sitting at which Mr. Gonner was present (p. 481):—

"In the evening of same day Mr. Rendall came again, and there was also present Mr. Gonner, introduced as Mr. McCunn; but I accidentally used his right name once in Mrs. Piper's presence, *though she did not seem to attend*"

and then afterwards print, among notes by Mr. Gonner, more or less summarising the successes of his two sittings, the following paragraph (p. 491):—

"That Mrs. Piper was acquainted with my history and circumstances is highly improbable; not only was she unaware before she came to Liverpool that I should sit to her, but I was introduced to her under the name of a colleague, and not in my own. Any theory as to previous investigation falls necessarily to the ground, for even had she been able to discover the antecedents of Prof. Lodge's colleagues, she would in consequence of this safeguard have been led to attribute my relations and circumstances to another, his to me. As will, however, be seen, in the course of the interview, she uttered my name 'Gonner' (p. 489)."

As a matter of fact, she gave correctly only the surname which she could have heard, while the Christian name was given quite wrongly. The italics, in which the words "though she did not seem to attend" are written, are mine.

§ 3. Subjective Fallacies.

We have now to consider in this section what I may call the "subjective" fallacies of experiments with Mrs. Piper, before we can express an opinion about the explanation of her thought-reading powers. In comparison with the objective fallacies discussed in the last section, the subjective fallacies are perhaps even more important, inasmuch as they are more subtle and illusive. For so many of Mrs. Piper's statements are vague and ambiguous,

even when they are given without hesitation or fishing, that a great deal turns on the editor's interpretation of her meaning, as well as on an accurate record of her words. In support of this statement, I cannot do better than give the following passages from Podmore's "The Newer Spiritualism," (p. 289) :—

"The whole machinery of communication, as interpreted to us by the controls, is directly productive of ambiguities of many kinds. The communicating 'spirits' do not, at any rate in recent years, profess to assume direct control over Mrs. Piper's organism. They used to dictate what they wanted to say to Phinuit or G.P.; they now dictate to Rector. This procedure, whether it really represents any psychical fact, or is merely part of the machinery of the medium's trance, at any rate affords a cloak for many mistakes and an excuse for many ambiguities, to be interpreted according to the sitter's prepossessions."

and (p. 290) :—

"At even the most conspicuously successful séances with Mrs. Piper, the precisely definite statements admitting of but one interpretation are comparatively few. Personal messages are apt to bear no label either of origin or destination; names and allusions are thrown out haphazard, to be taken up and identified as the sitter wills."

and (p. 291) :—

"In short, where the context is not given, the imagination of the sitter has to supply it, and the process bears a very close analogy to the corresponding process in the material world of building up a perception out of faint and inadequate sensory data. The result may be a visual image corresponding to the half-guessed reality, or it may be altogether wide of the mark—an illusion, in short. But the mental process is much the same, and it is often impossible to say just where the line which divides reality from illusion is overstepped. That it is sometimes overstepped will be clear to the reader who summons up the courage to study Prof. Hyslop's monumental report already referred to. (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. xvi.)"

and lastly, *à propos* of cross-correspondences (p. 246) :—

"For in dealing with ambiguous, allusive, and semi-coherent utterances of this kind, it is almost inevitable that the interpretation should be guided by the unconscious bias of the reader. A conspicuous example of the tendency is afforded by the Shakespeare-Bacon cryptogram."

These quotations will have shown the reader the large part which bias necessarily plays in psychical research, and to myself the chief interest of studying Mrs. Piper's mediumship centres in the fact that it is really a study in bias. But before I give definite examples of the bias of her interpreters, a few remarks about the need of an accurate report are desirable. Where a hired stenographer with no emotional interest in the result is employed, then the record of a sitting may be regarded as scientifically satisfactory, and it is only in such a case that "the report of the proceedings shows how far such methods (as fishing and inferences from unguarded admissions) were actually employed."

(" The Newer Spiritualism," p. 183.) In the majority of the sittings appearing in Volume VI. there is no complete stenographic report, and though I am satisfied that most of the records give a fairly accurate impression to the reader, yet I must give one example of the errors which may arise, if an independent and full report is not made. It occurs in the last of the notes appended by Mr. Pye to the report of his sitting (*loc. cit.*, p. 603) :—

" From this point the notes do not appear to me to call for much remark. The mention of Anna and Charlie is to be noticed, and there is a rather curious difference between my idea of what was said in the phrase, ' The friend that passed out with consumption,' etc., and Mr. Leaf's notes, which I am satisfied are correct. The word which I was confident I had heard was ' sister ' and not ' friend,' and my sister Edith did die of consumption. We were very deeply attached to each other, and I had been looking for a mention of her name."

It will by now be clear to the reader, both from what I have said and from the quotations I have given, that the sittings recorded in Volume VI., (in which all statements were spoken by the medium,) were characterised by ambiguities not only of expression but also of sound. And such ambiguities were not excluded, even if they were lessened, by the later practice of the control making statements in writing. Podmore, in " The Newer Spiritualism " (p. 287), gives several examples; *e.g.*, " boat " written like " hat " ; and when the sitter carelessly read it as " hat," the control pretended it was " hat " that was meant. Similarly, " think " and " drink," " Alice " and " Annie," " mother and brother " were confused. But perhaps the most skilful attempt at an evasive answer was " Frad," in which the " d " was written like " nk," so that it would do for Fred or Frank, one of which the medium suspected was right.

The need for accuracy in the report is also insisted on by a researcher like Mrs. Sidgwick, who says (vol. vi., p. 618) :—

" Another point of some interest is the question of verbatim reports of the séances. It has often been said that it is only by shorthand reports that the weak points of the séances can be fully brought out. There is no doubt that full reports are valuable in this way, but I think that they would sometimes bring out strong points as well as weak ones. I felt, while I wrote as fast as I could (without shorthand) for Mr. Gale, that a verbatim report would have brought out many details which I was forced to omit or could do but scant justice to.

" On the other hand, the evidential value of a shorthand report may easily be overrated. When so much may depend on manner, gesture, and tone of voice, both in Phinuit and the sitter, the fullest shorthand report cannot be complete."

This passage is very interesting as indirectly bearing witness to the importance of insisting on the fallacies due to bias; for it is just " manner, gesture, and tone of voice," which cannot be recorded by any instrument of precision, and which lend themselves to a variety of interpretations. I, personally, have no doubt

that the supposed evidential value of " manner, gesture and tone of voice " is one of the most powerful factors underlying the belief of many who hold to the spiritualistic hypothesis. But, just as in the case of those deceived by spirit photographs—

(*see* " Modern Spiritualism," vol. ii., pp. 121, 122), " A police officer stated that Buguet showed him a portrait which had done duty as the sister of one sitter, the mother of a second, and the friend of a third ")—

it is easy to show how little objective value such evidence has. Thus Prof. James summed up the Edmund Gurney control of Mrs. Piper's early period of mediumship in the following words :—

(vol. vi., p. 656), " I can now merely say that neither then, nor at any time, was there, to my mind, the slightest inner verisimilitude in the personation. But the failure to produce a more plausible E. speaks directly in favour of the non-participation of the medium's conscious mind in the performance. She could so easily have coached herself to be more effective."—

while Prof. Lodge seems to have found him remarkably lifelike in spite of uncharacteristic utterances (*see* pp. 493, 516, 524 and 552).

Again, while Podmore points out that the character of the communications coming through the hand of Mrs. Holland, who never knew Edmund Gurney, is irreconcilable with the Edmund Gurney his friends knew, Miss Dallas (*see* " Mors Janua Vitae ? " p. 24 *et seq.*) appears to be rather impressed by the excellence of this script.

Similarly, I am sure that, if any one carefully reads through the records of sittings in Volume VI., he will be struck by the occurrence of expressions characteristic of Phinuit's style of conversation, when the medium is supposed to have been controlled by and to have given a realistic impersonation of some totally different individual.

" An earnest and critical student of psychical research " like Miss Dallas—whose book, referred to just above, on " certain communications purporting to come from Frederic W. H. Myers " appears to me, (in spite of the commendatory introduction by Prof. W. F. Barrett, F.R.S.,) to give a typically biassed interpretation of the records—admits " that Frederic Myers did not enter upon this quest with that indifference as to the result, which some would have us regard as an essential condition for an impartial investigator " ; but considers that this does not matter in the case of " sincere minds, who honour truth above all things, and are prepared to sacrifice their most cherished hopes if they are convinced that they are illusions " (pp. 3, 4). Similarly, Frederic Myers himself wrote : " Desire is not necessarily bias, and my personal history has convinced myself—though I cannot claim that it shall convince others also—that my wishes do not strongly

warp my judgment; nay, that sometimes the very keenness of personal anxiety may make one afraid to believe, as readily as other men, that which one most longs for." (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. xv., p. 113.) Consequently, it is necessary to point out that *bias* is essentially a sub-conscious, emotional factor, working when we are not consciously aware of it, so that however much we may think we are on our guard against the fallacies connected with it, we are still liable to be its victims. This is true of every human being, but least so of scientifically trained investigators whose bias is in the direction of fear of being deceived by misleading or inadequate evidence, and who, consequently, demand observations made with instruments of precision, or consistent and repeatedly verified observations in problems like psychical research, where bias of every kind is so liable to influence the records.

This brings me to the stage of giving examples of bias on the part of some of the chief investigators in the domain of psychical research. In this category many well-known names must be omitted, owing to the exigencies of space; but I have found examples of bias in the writings of nearly all of them. Frederic Myers, both as part author of "Phantasms of the Living," and author of "Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death," and as one of the most enthusiastic leaders of the S.P.R., is the name perhaps best known. I need not say much more now to prove his bias, as he admits it himself; but I want to point out that he underwent no proper training in experimental psychology, and that enthusiasm and a poetical temperament hardly took its place—rather the reverse—so that I have nowhere in this book quoted him as an authority. Moreover, a few words about the origin of his bias may be of interest, as throwing light on the attitude of such researchers towards these problems. In "Fragments of Prose and Poetry" he gives a short sketch of his spiritual growth, and describes how, after passing through a stage of gradual disillusionment with orthodox Christianity, he found hope for his instinctive longing for immortality in the phenomena of spiritualism, encouraged thereto by Prof. Sidgwick (*see* pp. 32, 98, and 99). These are his words (p. 32) :—

"The first scene in the long struggle consisted in the slow growth of resolve within me to spend all life's energies in beating against the walls of the prison-house, in case a panel anywhere might yield. To these wild hopes Sidgwick replied with modified encouragement."—(The reader will note, I hope, that Myers was not resolved to get at *truth* in the abstract—which might consist in the 'panels of the prison-house' being indestructible—but to break down one particular panel which corresponded to the aspect of truth that he wanted to establish. He continues in the next paragraph)—"Yet I had at first great repugnance to studying the phenomena alleged by Spiritualists; to re-entering by the scullery window the heavenly mansion out of which I had been kicked through the front door. It was not till the autumn of 1873 that I came across my first personal experience of forces un-

known to science. I shall not, in this story of inward feelings, recount the special phenomena which impressed me."

While on the subject of Frederic Myers, it is rather pertinent to cite him as a witness of the spirit in which the Society for Psychical Research was founded. For in his essay on Edmund Gurney, he writes, ("Fragments of Prose and Poetry," p. 65), "The Society for Psychical Research was founded, with the establishment of thought-transference—already rising within measurable distance of proof—as its primary aim, with hypnotism as its second study, and with many another problem ranged along its dimmer horizon." This is a valuable testimony to the bias of the founders of the S.P.R. in favor of telepathy, as Myers clearly says that their object was to prove that telepathy is a fact, not merely to research whether such a faculty exists.

Rather a similar attitude is that of the late Prof. William James, who died early this year. For while recognising that probability or the "rule of presumption" would lead him "to deny spirits, and to explain the Piper phenomena by a mixture of fraud, subconscious personation, lucky accident and telepathy," he admitted that his bias made him lean in the direction of the spiritualistic hypothesis, and warned the reader to make allowance for it. (*See Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. xxiii., pp. 34-36.) It will be remembered that his father was a well-known Swedenborgian, interested in the spiritualistic movement of the fifties, so that there was every chance of the son growing up with a bias for or against spiritualism. Prof. James, however, unlike nearly all other psychical researchers, knew a great deal about psychology, and was the author of "Principles of Psychology," perhaps the most interesting book written on the subject. The fact of his training undoubtedly renders Prof. James' observations and views much more reliable than those of an investigator like Myers; yet he was liable, as the result of bias, in my opinion, to give such an unscientific reason as "moral certainty" for belief in Mrs. Piper's ignorance of certain facts—thus (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. xxiii., p. 26), "I myself," says Prof. James, "feel morally certain that the waking Mrs. Piper was ignorant of the incident and of the correspondence."

This refers to an incident, which was supposed at the time to be valuable evidence for the genuineness of the Hodgson-control, and which, in my opinion, led Podmore to the verge of also showing bias when he wrote in "The Newer Spiritualism" (pp. 219, 220):—

"Mrs. Piper had not been to either house, and the details mentioned are the trivial, intimate things which Hodgson, always reticent, as Prof. James points out, would be most unlikely to have mentioned to her. But the incidents, so far as they could be verified, were within the knowledge, if not always within the immediate consciousness, of the sitter"—

For we are told, on the previous page, that the "reticent" Dr. Hodgson had consulted, in his disappointment, the Piper trance-controls about a refusal of marriage from a Miss Hannah Densmore; and Podmore also admits a few pages before, *à propos* of the evidential value of the Piper-Hodgson control's statements in America, how very close had been the intercourse between Mrs. Piper and Dr. Hodgson for many years, as follows (p. 215) :—

"In marked contrast, the Piper-Hodgson in America seems to have been one of the most lifelike and dramatic impersonations of the whole series given through Mrs. Piper, and many true and relevant statements were made of an intimate kind, such as could scarcely have proceeded from Mrs. Piper herself. Of course, Hodgson was well known to Mrs. Piper in her normal state, and had, further, been present at her trance-sittings for many years, and was on intimate terms, so to speak, with her controls. There were thus several channels through which it is possible some of the information given might have reached Mrs. Piper, and in fact, as will be shown, two or three incidents which at first sight seemed of an almost crucial character were robbed of their chief evidential value by the later discovery that some of the facts had at one time been within the knowledge of the trance-intelligence; but when all deductions are made, the impersonation remains a very remarkable one."

In concluding my remarks about Prof. James' bias, I cannot indicate his attitude towards these problems better than he does himself in the following passage (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. xxiii., p. 35) :—

"I myself can perfectly well imagine spirit agency, and find my mind vacillating about it curiously. When I take the phenomena piecemeal, the notion that Mrs. Piper's subliminal self should keep her sitters apart as expertly as it does, remembering its past dealings with each of them so well, not mixing their communications more, and all the while humbugging them so profusely, is quite compatible with what we know of the dream-life of hypnotised subjects. Their consciousness, narrowed to one suggested kind of operation, shows remarkable skill in that operation. If we suppose Mrs. Piper's dream-life once for all to have had the notion suggested to it that it must personate spirits to sitters, the fair degree of virtuosity it shows need not, I think, surprise us. But I find that when I ascend from the details to the whole meaning of the phenomenon, and especially when I connect the Piper case with all the other cases I know of automatic writing and mediumship, and with the whole record of spirit-possession in human history, the notion that such an immense current of experience, complex in so many ways, should spell out absolutely nothing but the word 'humbug,' acquires a character of unlikeliness. The notion that so many men and women, in all other respects honest enough, should have this preposterous monkeying self annexed to their personality, seems to me so weird that the spirit theory immediately takes on a more probable appearance. The spirits, if spirits there be, must indeed work under incredible complications and falsifications, but at least, if they are present, some honesty is left in a whole department of the universe which otherwise is run by pure deception. The more I realise the quantitative massiveness of the phenomenon and its complexity, the more incredible it seems to me that, in a world all of whose vaster features we are in the habit of considering to be *sincere* at least, however brutal, this feature should be wholly constituted of insincerity."

Podmore's commentary on this quotation should be looked

up by the interested reader (" The Newer Spiritualism," p. 296), and is to the effect that the teaching of history inculcates a lesson the reverse of what Prof. James' bias leads him to teach. I myself should also like to point out that Prof. James' remarks might equally well be applied to experimental hypnotic phenomena, where all sorts of deceptions are perpetrated by means of suggestion.

The next two examples are meant to illustrate how bias works in " overstepping the line which divides reality from illusion," as Podmore euphemistically puts it. The first is taken from " The Newer Spiritualism " (p. 292), and is almost typical of the way Prof. Hyslop interprets the Piper records :—

" The Hyslop control (supposed to be the spirit of Prof. Hyslop's father) is asked if he remembers Samuel Cooper ; the reply is that he was an old friend in the West, and that they used to have long talks on philosophical subjects. Of Samuel Cooper, an old neighbour of Mr. Hyslop, the statement is false. But there was a Dr. *Joseph* Cooper, whom Mr. Hyslop knew, and with whom he may have conversed or corresponded on theological questions in 1858. It is true that Joseph is not the same name as Samuel, that theology is not precisely philosophy, and that Dr. Cooper did not live west of Mr. Hyslop, but, unfortunately, east. There was, however, a Cooper Memorial College founded after his death, of which Mr. Hyslop may have been thinking, or the mention of talks on philosophy may have been intended to apply to correspondence on theology with Prof. Hyslop's uncle. ' The misunderstanding would probably be Rector's.' (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. xvi., p. 500.) On the whole, Prof. Hyslop thinks the incident ' has considerable interest and importance ' (p. 410)."

The second is an example of a far-fetched interpretation, suggested by Sir O. Lodge to explain the following cryptic statement made by Phinuit to Mr. Gonner at a sitting on December 20th, 1889 (vol. vi., p. 485) :—

Phin. : " Florence, who is Florence ? Florence got the headache, dark eyes and dark hair. Lying down at present. Got artistic tastes, don't you know ; paints, paints all round her, you know, blackboard, brushes, and things on the table." *Mr. G. :* " Who is Florence ? " *Phin. :* " Why, she has a friend, Miss Whiteman, if you must know. Do you know now who I mean ? " *Mr. G. :* " No, not in the least." *Phin. :* " Well, then, say so, can't you ? Florence's friend she was. She had trouble with the head lying down."

Sir O. Lodge obtained a further reference to Florence at a sitting by himself on December 21st (vol. vi., p. 493) :—

Phin. : " You have a sister named Florence." *O.L. :* " No." *Phin. :* " Well, Florence belongs to you ; it is *your* Florence. She has the friend Whiteman. But there are two Florences. There's a Florence in some other country. One paints and the other doesn't paint. One's married and the other isn't married. It is the one who doesn't paint who is married." [To this is appended the following note by Prof. Lodge : " I happen to have two cousins Florence, one married and abroad, and who, so far as I know, does not paint. I wrote to my other cousin Florence (who paints and is not married), asking if she had a friend Miss or Mrs. Whiteman, or Whyteman, whom she had seen lately,

and had something the matter with her head, a headache or something. She sent a postcard to say: 'No. What on earth do you mean?' Next day another postcard to say: 'Whytehead won't do, will it? I am this very day returning such a one's call, and, drinking tea, it has struck me, on re-reading your letter, as being something like the name you inquire about. . . . She is lately married.' *It is perhaps more than a little far-fetched to suggest that Dr. Phinuit may have caught the name wrongly, and on being corrected by the syllable 'head' have proceeded to say that she had something wrong with her head!*"] The italics are mine.

I now come to an example of bias which, in comparison with those just given, may almost be said to be non-existent. I refer to the writings of Mr. Leaf; for he never made unjustifiable suggestions, or was blind to the natural implications of words and facts. Yet for that very reason it will be interesting if I can show that he had a slightly biassed attitude towards Mrs. Piper's mediumship, and so for the time was in danger of having his judgment warped. I cannot find, as I have said, any definite or gross instance of bias, but I base these remarks on sentences here and there indicating that he very much desired to give telepathy as an explanation. Thus the following type of sentence is not uncommon in his report, "An equally unsatisfactory sitting, leading to an equally justifiable incredulity on the part of the sitter, is that of Mr. Thomas Barkworth" (vol. vi., p. 606). The sitting in question was certainly unsuccessful, but I do not see how it can fairly be called unsatisfactory by any investigator anxious to get at the truth whatever the explanation of the phenomena may be; for when this is the case, all phenomena carefully recorded are interesting.

I also think the following commentary on Miss Alice Johnson's sitting is rather typical of Mr. Leaf's attitude (p. 614):—

"'Had you an aunt who died of cancer?' is a fishing question such as was asked of many sitters. Having a partially favourable reply, Dr. Phinuit begins to hedge about the cancer, but with doubtful success. The 'lady who passed out with consumption' is another obvious sort of leading question, but the description given, though general enough, is not recognised at the time, so the matter is quietly dropped. . . . Moreover, if muscle-reading came into play, it led to the reading of unconscious, not conscious, thought. For Miss Johnson did not know at the time of the sitting that her father's step-mother had died of cancer, and was, as a matter of fact, thinking about an aunt whose death she fancied—wrongly, as it turned out—might have been due to this cause. . . ."

"Even on the most unfavourable view, therefore, it seems necessary to assume more than chance and skill in order to explain this sitting."—

where he thinks that telepathy is more probable than muscle-reading, etc., as an explanation of the results; but whether I am biassed myself in attributing bias to Mr. Leaf, the reader must judge after he has weighed the significance of the actual communication which contains an excellent example of a leading question and which was as follows (p. 611):—

Phin. : "Had you an aunt who died of cancer?" ***A.J.*** "Not that I know of; but I might not have known." *Phin.* : "It is what I call cancer." *A. J.* : "Was it a relation of my mother's—her sister?" *Phin.* : "No, a relation of your father's." (My father's stepmother died of cancer.)

I now propose to complete my evidence for bias by citing as witnesses two secretaries of the S.P.R., Mr. Piddington and Mr. Frank Podmore, respectively in office at the present time and nearly twenty-five years ago, soon after the foundation of the Society. The example of Mr. Piddington's bias which I am going to quote is, curiously enough, given by Mr. Podmore, and illustrates beautifully the effect of "obsession by an idea" and the spirit in which the elucidation of cross-correspondences has been attempted. The whole account—of how Mr. Piddington, with his bias for the spiritualistic hypothesis, was convinced in the "Browning, Hope and Star" cross-correspondence by evidence which "would not be accepted in a telepathic experiment,"—is too long to quote, but should be referred to by the reader if possible ("The Newer Spiritualism," pp. 250-253). I can only here give an extract containing "Mr. Piddington's very candid account of the state of mind in which he approached the séances," as follows :—

"In the course of the next few days Mr. Piddington read the scripts of Mrs. and Miss Verrall, in which the cross-correspondence 'Hope, Star, and Browning' occurred, and, in his own words, before February 20th: 'I had become possessed, I may even say obsessed, with the idea that Mrs. Verrall's script of January 28th., which had on February 11th been described in the trance by the Piper-Myers, as 'Hope, Star, and Browning,' was an attempt by the Verrall-Myers to give, by means of indirect allusions to Stanza VII. of "Abt Vogler," an intelligent answer to the Latin message.' (*Report*, p. 330.)"

And now I come to Mr. Frank Podmore, who, unfortunately, died last year. His writings, even more than those of Mr. Leaf, are so sanely critical and show so much industrious research, obviously inspired by a real desire to get at the true explanation of mediumistic phenomena, whatever it might be, that I am loath to criticise his attitude. But I have such an admiration for his contributions to psychical research that I am afraid of being myself blind to their imperfections if I abstain from criticism. Having been part-author of "Phantasms of the Living," at a comparatively early period, he lent his authority and name to views on telepathy; and this appears to me to have given him a slight bias in favour of this hypothesis, although his later books "Modern Spiritualism" (1902) and "The Newer Spiritualism" (1910) increasingly recognise the difficulties associated therewith, and the inadequacy of the evidence for the spiritualistic hypothesis.

He seems to me to show bias chiefly by making light of small inconsistencies, and sometimes by ignoring an easier explanation of the phenomena than telepathy. Thus he cites as impressive

evidence for telepathy some of the information given by the George Pelham control, and, among other successes, mentions how at a sitting with Mr. and Mrs. Howard, on November 28th, 1892, a description of their summer residence was given, a house to which Mrs. Piper had never been. The report of the sitting referring to this incident runs as follows :—

G.P. inquired what had been done with a special picture which he had owned. *Mrs. H.* : " That got torn up after you passed out; but here is a picture that I don't know whether you will recognise, but you used to know the place." (G.P. puts picture on top of the head.) . . . *G.P.* : " What is this ? This is your summer-house." *Mrs. H.* : " Yes, you have got it right." *G.P.* : " But I have forgotten the name of the town." *Mrs. H.* : " Don't you remember D. ? " *G.P.* : " Oh, the little brick house and the little vine, grape-vine, some call them. Yes, I remember it all; it comes back as distinctly as the daylight. . . . Where is the little out-house ? " (All correct. The little brick hen-house that, like the house itself, was solidly built of brick, just did not come into the picture, but came to the very edge of it, so it was natural for George to ask where it was. The grape-vine that covered the whole house up to the roof was a striking feature of it.—K.) . . . *Mrs. H.* : " There is the painting " (handing another picture). *G.P.* : " No, I have no recollection of that." *Mrs. H.* : " No; I painted it when you were not there. You never saw that." *G.P.* : " It is not fresh to me at all; but this (fingering the photo. of the house) is very clear."

But the only commentary he gives is contained in the following paragraph :—

" It will be seen that the impersonation was natural and life-like, and that the intelligence manifesting in the trance showed apparent knowledge of the country house, which his friends had left six years before, and of the early childhood of their daughter. Nothing is indeed stated which was not within the present consciousness of the sitters, but its presentment must be admitted to be dramatically true to life, and no misstatements appear to have been made." (" The Newer Spiritualism," p. 177.)—

And he makes no suggestion that Mrs. Piper saw the photo and that, with her knowledge of American country houses, she would know there might be a little out-house. (Nor does he dwell on " G.P.'s " surprising ignorance of the name of the town where the house was.) Yet, in view of her failure to describe photos of people whose features she had never seen, this is the easiest explanation of the incident; for in Miss Emily C.'s second sitting, as we have seen, she named a photo, placed against her forehead, " *without looking at it so far as could be seen,*" of Edmund Gurney, whose features were familiar to her, but failed with the photo of a friend of Mr. Leaf whose features she did not know. Indeed, such experiments with photos appear to me to be the most crucial of all the tests tried on Mrs. Piper, both because they could be repeated so often, and also because her successes in this department of mediumship bear such affinities to the illusions practised by conjurers. It is therefore all the more surprising that Podmore

should have ignored this fallacy, and that those, who base their explanation of her successes on a belief in telepathy, should not have made an exact series of experiments testing her power of naming a photo, unknown to her but known to the sitter, and exercising more precaution in the test than allowing her to put the uncovered photo on her head—although *apparently* without looking at it—for it is just because our eyes are deceived by the tricks of a conjurer that we become the victims of an illusion.

Again, I think Podmore shows bias when he cites, as a strong piece of evidence supporting telepathy, the incident of Mrs. Piper recognising the photo of George Pelham and assumes her ignorance of his features. These are his words (*see* pp. 172-177) :—

"George Pelham (the name is assumed) was a young American lawyer and author, well known to Richard Hodgson, who in Febuary, 1892, died suddenly as the result of an accident in New York. (*See Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. xiii., pp. 284-582.) Hodgson and he had had long talks on philosophic subjects, and had discussed the possibility of a future life, which to Pelham seemed incredible and inconceivable. Four years before his death he had had a single sitting with Mrs. Piper, but his name had been carefully concealed from the medium, and there is no reason to suppose that she knew of the existence of such a person. Mrs. Piper, it should be added, resided in the suburbs of Boston. Pelham, who had lived for many years in Boston, had passed the last three years of his life in New York."

And again, in a summary of the most impressive evidence for supernatural powers, he says :—

"There is, too, the curious fact that Mrs. Piper has occasionally recognised photographs of the supposed control. She selected a photograph of G.P. out of several others, and on a later occasion, after a series of communications purporting to come from one Joseph Marble, in the waking stage of the trance, she picked out his photograph from among several others, with the exclamation, 'That is the man I saw.' Now, Mrs. Piper had only once seen G.P. at a sitting held four years before his death, and then did not know his name; and Mr. Marble she had never seen at all. Of course, again, the incident is explicable on the assumption that the sitters conceived the visual image of the deceased with sufficient vividness to impress it on Mrs. Piper's mind; and for telepathy in this form we have some direct experimental proof."

To my mind the recognition of the photo and the successes of the G.P. control in general require no occult or telepathic explanation after the sitting that G.P. had had with Mrs. Piper in life. For, as the examples already given show, it is quite likely that, if Mrs. Piper did not find out by fishing and guessing his name and circumstances at the time of the sitting (when, be it noted, Mr. Pelham was living in Boston), she did so afterwards; and it would be quite in accordance with the trance-personality's ideas of morality to store up the information and use it with striking effect on the convenient occurrence of G.P.'s death. In any case, the G.P. control, like all other controls, failed to answer test questions, and evaded the challenge in a most suspicious

manner, as already pointed out in the first section of this essay by a quotation from "The Newer Spiritualism."

This last example shows how the whole question of the explanation of certain of Mrs. Piper's successes turns on the difficulty of knowing whether we can exclude for certain, not only the assistance of sub-conscious hints,—not necessarily spoken words,—undetected through bias or want of training both by the reporter and the sitter, (often emotionally interested in the result by ties of old friendship or love,) but also the medium's conscious or subconscious memory. Dr. Hodgson, as the result of his extensive knowledge of the Piper records, came to the conclusion that the successful sittings grouped themselves not around particular sitters, who might be supposed to show bias, but around particular spirit-controls who in life had been characterised by energetic, bright, enthusiastic natures, such as George Pelham and Dr. Hodgson himself possessed; whereas persons who had committed suicide or had suffered from depression made unsuccessful controls. (*See Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. xiii., pp. 391-395.) I am not in a position to criticise Dr. Hodgson's general conclusion, but from my study of the records of Volume VI. of the *Proc. S.P.R.* I am struck with the fact that all the most successful sittings group themselves around the sitters who appear to have been least sceptical. Thus, taking Sir O. Lodge's "List of Incidents unknown to, or forgotten by, or unknowable to, persons present" (vol. vi., p. 649), I find the following result—

Sir O. Lodge	10	Lady Lodge	2
Mr. Lund (at Sir O. Lodge's house)	2	Mrs. Verrall	5
Mr. Thompson, ditto ..	3	Miss A. Johnson	2
Mr. Rendall, ditto	1	Mrs. Sidgwick	1
Mr. Gonner, ditto	2		
Mr. J. T. Clarke	2	Mr. W. Leaf	1
Mr. O. Browning	1	Mr. F.	1
Mr. Deronco	2	Miss X.	1
Prof. Sidgwick	2	Mrs. B.	1
Mr. Gale	1	Mrs. Z.	1

making a total of forty-one successes divided among nineteen sitters.

Of course the figures are somewhat influenced by the number of sittings, so that I do not lay so much stress on these as on the names themselves. At the same time I venture to exclude Mr. Lund and Mr. Walter Leaf from this list; for if the reader will look up Mr. Lund's account of his sitting (*see* § 2, p. 330), he will see that the "pet name Margie" can hardly be called a piece of information unknown to the sitter, while "Letter signed J.B.W. partially read" was an experiment by Sir O. Lodge himself (although Mr. Lund happened to be holding the medium's hand), and I have shown that in all probability Mrs. Piper managed to read this letter. Then again, the "Two Gurney letters" at Mr. W. Leaf's sitting can hardly be called a success of this nature, in view of Mr. Leaf's

statement that (vol. vi., p. 634), "Nothing in the sitting can be regarded as of any importance, as it is certainly within the range of successful guessing that I should have kept two letters from Edmund Gurney."

Now, if we examine into the type of sitters that remain, we find that in the majority of cases they show—to put it mildly—extremely little incredulity. Mr. Thompson had consulted mediums before. Mr. Clarke, a friend of Prof. James and Dr. Hodgson, had had sittings in America. Principal Rendall and Mr. Gonner in their notes on their sittings make every allowance for the incorrectness of Mrs. Piper's statements. Mr. Oscar Browning's sitting will not surprise those who know him, and among the ladies Miss X. and Mrs. Z. may be taken as extreme examples of a tendency to give hints. Mrs. Z., as we have already seen, gave so many hints that Mr. Myers considered her sitting as useless; and Miss X. was herself a well-known medium who later obtained the praise of one of Mrs. Piper's spirit-controls, which I reproduce rather fully, as it is a highly interesting testimony from the "spirit-world" to the nature of mediums (vol. vi., p. 552):—

Edmund Gurney: "Lodge, don't loose hold of a good thing. I could have done much for the Society if I had lived, but I can do still more now. It is wonderfully difficult to communicate. All the time I've been here, I have only found two mediums besides this one. Miss X. is one; very honest. The other is that Miss Fowler. I have been there once. Disgusting surroundings, but I went. Yes, she's a true medium. More people might be mediums, but many won't when they can." *O.L.:* "What constitutes a medium?" *E.G.:* "Not too much spirituality, and not too much animalism. Not the highest people, and not the lowest. Sympathetic, and not too self-conscious. Able to let their minds be given up to another. That sort of person, easily influenced. Many could, but their pride and a sense of self comes in and spoils it. As to the physical things; mostly fraud. The rest electricity. (The supposed speaker was not the least likely to refer things to electricity in this casual fashion.) A person's nerves are doing things they don't know what. They are often not conscious when they move things." *O.L.:* "It's like automatic writing, then?" *E.G.:* "Something. Often the bells and noises are made by them when under the control of some other spirit, and then the message may be genuine. Trance things and automatic writing are good. Often good. Other things sometimes; but mostly fraud." (Further talk of this kind for some time.)

Now Miss X., we are told, had perhaps the most successful sitting of the whole series. The actual words from the report are as follows (vol. vi., p. 629):—

"A large part of the statements made at this and the following sittings were quite correct, but in nearly all cases of so private and personal a nature that it is impossible to publish them. Only fragments, therefore, can be given, with the proper names omitted. But these sittings were perhaps the most successful and convincing of the whole series."

Of course, as the details are not given, I cannot estimate how true this statement is; but that it should have been made about the sitting of one medium with another is a significant fact. Mrs. Piper herself—or perhaps I should rather say Phinuit—was quite well aware of the importance of bias and the value of suggestion, as we find the trance-personality on several occasions resorting to the device of making "Mr. E." or some other visitant from the "spirit-world," talk about the necessity of employing mediums or testify to the genuineness of Phinuit, saying how useful he is there and what hard work he has. Thus the following conversation between Sir O. Lodge and "Mr. E." is almost more *instructive* than the one just given (vol. vi., p. 516):—

Mr. E.: "Lodge, how are you? I tell you, I'm living, not dead. That's me. You know me, don't you?" *O.L.*: "Yes. Delighted to see you again." *Mr. E.*: "Don't give it up, Lodge. Cling to it. It's the best thing you have. It's coarse in the beginning, but it can be ground down fine. You'll know best and correct (?). It can only come through a trance. You have to put her in a trance. You've got to do it that way to make yourself known." *O.L.*: "Is it bad for the medium?" *Mr. E.*: "It's the only way, Lodge. In one sense it's bad, but in another it's good. It is her work. If I take possession of the medium's body and she goes out, then I can use her organism to tell the world important truths. There is an infinite power above us, Lodge, believe it fully. Infinite over all, most marvellous. One can tell a medium, she's like a ball of light. You look as dark and material as possible, but we find two or three lights shining. It's like a series of rooms with candles at one end. Must use analogy to express it. When you need a light you use it, when you have finished you put it out. They are like transparent windows to see through. . . . Lodge, keep up your courage, there is a quantity to hope for yet. Hold it up for a time. Don't be in a hurry. Get facts; no matter what they call you, go on investigating. Test to the fullest. Assure yourself, then publish. It will be all right in the end—no question about it. It's true." *O.L.*: "You have seen my uncle Jerry, haven't you?" *Mr. E.*: "Yes, I met him a little while ago—a very clever man—had an interesting talk with him." *O.L.*: "What sort of person is this Dr. Phinuit?" *Mr. E.*: "Dr. Phinuit is a peculiar type of man. He goes about continually, and is thrown in with everybody. He is eccentric and quaint, but good-hearted. I wouldn't do the things he does for anything. He lowers himself sometimes—it's a great pity. He has very curious ideas about things and people. He receives a great deal about people from themselves (?). And he gets expressions and phrases that one doesn't care for, vulgar phrases he picks up by meeting uncanny people through the medium. These things tickle him, and he goes about repeating them. He has to interview a great number of people, and has no easy berth of it. A high type of man couldn't do the work he does. But he is a good-hearted old fellow. Good-bye, Lodge. Here's the doctor coming."

Conversely, Mrs. Piper recognised in an outside sitter, like Mr. Lund, the absence of bias, and called him a "hard" man, and similarly, it is interesting to note the want of success she experienced in the case of sittings with Prof. Alexander Macalister, F.R.S., and Prof. G. H. Darwin, F.R.S., both of whom may

reasonably be called impartial, highly-trained men of science. Their testimony, in fact, I regard of so much value that I shall conclude this section of my essay by quoting their comments on their sittings. Prof. Macalister's are contained in a letter to Mr. Myers as follows (vol. vi., p. 605) :—

" I am quite satisfied that Mrs. Piper is one of the many persons who show that protean and obscure state that for want of a better term we call hystero-epilepsy. Like most others who show induced phenomena of that kind she is easily led, and quite wideawake enough all through to profit by suggestions. I let her see a blotch of ink on my finger, and she said that I was a writer. I had just before felt her pulse, so she said I wrote on medical subjects. I have, when I bend my knee, a very strongly marked ridge on the bone, which becomes unusually prominent. (I used to have, in my old walking days, unusually powerful muscles in my legs.) She felt this, and then made the guess of there being something wrong with my knee, shielding herself when I said this was wrong by saying it was my father's. In short, except the guess about my sister, Helen, who is alive, there was not a single guess which was nearly right. Helen is not an uncommon Scotch name, and she has been in Cambridge. Mrs. Piper is not anæsthetic during the so-called trance, and if you ask my private opinion, it is that the whole thing is an imposture and a poor one. I have often seen a much better fit got up to order ; and my sister Helen, who sometimes amuses herself and other people by chiromancy, according to the simple mechanical rules of D'Argentigny, makes often very much luckier guesses than did your pythoness. I was very much interested in seeing how nearly she was trapped into forgetting to muffle and disguise her voice when I pulled at her eyelid."

To complete Prof. Macalister's account, I am adding the detailed report referring to the naming of his sister Helen :—

Phin. : " One called Eliza is your sister, I get her ethereally. Also Mary, and then another. There are two Marys connected with you, one in the body, one in the spirit. Also Eliza. Then there is Ellen—not quite that, nearly so. Ellan, Ellen—is it that or Helen ? I get the name both ways. (Asked, " Is she in the body or the spirit ? ") Two names, one in the body, Ellen in the body, Helen in the spirit. There is Mary Ellen. Then there is Helen. Three of them—one is the mother, the other is the sister." (I had a sister Lizzie, never called Elizabeth. She died when I was an infant. I never had a relation named Ellen. My mother's name was Margaret. I have a sister Helen alive, the only one of my family of that name.)

Prof. G. H. Darwin had two sittings in 1889, on November 27th and 29th respectively. In the first he corrected the medium when in error ; in the second he did not. Here is his report of the first sitting (vol. vi., p. 624) :—

" On arriving at Mr. Myers' house, I saw the medium for about half a minute in the drawing-room, and was introduced as Mr. Smith.

" The first part of the sitting was devoted to my ailments. This was certainly a keen medical diagnosis, but it was, I think, not more than a doctor might venture to say from inspection of me, when he knew that he was to be rewarded for a correct diagnosis, and not to suffer for a wrong one. I was said to study, or think much ; this is a safe conjecture in a university town, when the observer is fortified by observation.

"The second half of the sitting was devoted to my friends. Not a single name or person was named correctly, although perhaps nine or ten were named. My father was referred to by three different Christian names, all incorrect. I was said to have two children (correct), and after changing about the sexes several times, they were got correct. On this occasion, I was to correct the medium when she was in error,"—

while his summary of both runs as follows (p. 627) :—

"Almost every statement made could have been given if the medium could have discovered my name and a few fragments of Cambridge talk between the first sitting and the second. The only things which appear to me even at all remarkable are the statements about my wife and child, which will have been seen to contain much error. In the second sitting it was agreed that I should not correct the medium when wrong, and this appears to me far preferable to the plan adopted in the first, when she was corrected. I remain wholly unconvinced either of any remarkable powers or of thought-transference."

§ 4. Successes Quoted in Support of Telepathy.

As the comments last quoted indicate, there remain few incidents requiring any telepathic explanation, when allowance has been made for all the fallacies we have been discussing. Nevertheless, these few incidents—forming what I called in § 1 the "few doubtful cases," where the information given was unknown to Mrs. Piper or the sitter—have to be dealt with before it is possible to sum up the evidence in connection with her mediumship, and come to some conclusion about the explanation of her powers. Podmore could apparently find only about ten cases that impressed him with the need of extending the hypothesis of telepathy between Mrs. Piper and her sitter to a power of reading the mind of some person at a distance. Of these cases, four are taken from Sir O. Lodge's list, already referred to, of forty-one incidents, where information not consciously within the knowledge of the sitter was given. It would take too long to discuss in detail the evidential value of all these incidents, so that I cannot find room for a consideration of more than half a dozen, which should be enough to serve as examples of the genuine cases, leaving a very few where it is best to be agnostic in view of the difficulty of being certain that the information given was unknown to Mrs. Piper or the sitter. Such a case is the incident with the G.P. control discussed on p. 178 of "The Newer Spiritualism."

I must draw attention to my use of the word "genuine," because Sir O. Lodge's list contains several incidents, which, as Podmore has pointed out, referred to facts known at one time either to Mrs. Piper or the sitter. The six examples I take as fairly typical are the four cited by Podmore and two others as follows: (1) The case of Uncle Jerry; (2) Charley and the bird; (3) Mr. Deronco and the picture; (4) Dr. Rich's father; (5) Trouble in the leg of Sir O. Lodge's son; (6) The incident of Mr.

Gonner's mother going out; one of four experiments in which the trance-intelligence described more or less correctly the acts of persons at a distance.

The case of Uncle Jerry really includes four incidents unknown to the sitter. (*a*) A fight between Jerry's brother Frank and another boy; (*b*) Swimming the creek with Frank; (*c*) The gift of a snake-skin to his brother Robert; (*d*) Killing and torturing a cat with the same brother Robert. It is rather a difficult case to elucidate, as it often crops up irrelevantly in the course of totally different subjects, and there are references to Uncle Jerry in as many as ten sittings. Some of these I have already dealt with, such as the nicks on the handle of Uncle Jerry's watch, the inscription on his snuff-box, etc. The first point to notice is that Phinuit took a whole sitting to discover this uncle's name, and then only succeeded by a most marked process of fishing and guessing, so that clearly Phinuit had no telepathic knowledge of Uncle Jerry's name. Phinuit tried John, then J-O-N-A-T-H-A-N—

[*Phin.*: "It is J. Confound it. He is telling it to me; telling about his brothers, too." *O. L.*: "I should be very glad if you would get him to speak." *Phin.*: "His name's Jonathan, confound it." (No.) "Don't you suppose I can hear it? Well, I can hear it anyhow. J-O-N-A-T-H-A-N. Why don't you talk about some of the rest of them? Go on to talk about the rest, and let me talk to him. I will bring him right up close to me" (vol. vi., p. 501).]

and then, after an interlude, Joseph and Jo (p. 502). In the next interlude, among many other subjects of conversation Phinuit impersonated the owner of the watch, when the following dialogue took place (p. 503):—

O. L.: "Do you remember anything when you were young?" *U. J.*: "Yes. I pretty nigh got drowned. I remember that (with a short characteristic laugh). Tried to swim the creek, and we fellows, all of us, got into a little boat. We got tipped over. He will remember it. Ask him if he (Uncle Jerry's brother Robert) remembers that about swimming the creek." (*See* notes at end of this series (p. 526), where it will be found that the "boat" is inaccurate; it should be a platform.)

It is important the reader should note that Phinuit's (or Uncle Jerry's) account of swimming the creek is quite incorrect in all the details, according to the account of another brother, Uncle Frank, who remembered the episode quite well; whereas Uncle Robert remembered nothing about it, and, according to Frank, did not take part in the adventure. Finally, towards the end of the sitting, in the middle of a conversation between Sir O. Lodge and Phinuit about a child that was suffering from worms and what treatment should be tried, Phinuit said, "Do you know who Jerry—J-E-R-R-Y—is?" Sir O. Lodge replied, "Yes. Tell him I want to hear from him." And thereupon Uncle Jerry was impersonated and made to say, "Tell Robert, Jerry still lives. He will be very glad to hear from me. This is my watch, and Robert is

my brother, and I am here. Uncle Jerry—my watch." (Impressively spoken.) (vol. vi., p. 506).

As in the case of Uncle Jerry's name, it is clear that Phinuit owed any information he gave about him to fishing, guessing, muscle-reading or hints; for he thought at first, when Uncle Jerry's watch was placed in Mrs. Piper's hands, that the owner had been a watch-maker. [" He used to work with little wheels " (p. 500).] Subsequently, when he had found out something about Uncle Jerry, and had actually been told by Sir O. Lodge that he used to do calculations and had been connected with an insurance company, he said he meant by " wheels " the seals on insurance-papers. Consequently there is no reason for attributing the statement about swimming the creek to anything but a lucky guess; especially as he gave no correct details.—As I shall show in the following paragraphs, the same criticism applies to all the other test incidents about Uncle Jerry.—Moreover, there was every probability that a vague guess about a boy swimming a creek (American for " river ") would find some facts to fit it; and, similarly, fights between boys, the killing of a cat, and the capture of a snake are not unusual experiences among a big family of healthy boys. Then it is very significant that Phinuit (or Uncle Jerry) made at least twelve guesses in connection with Uncle Jerry, which were either untrue or, if true, could never be verified. They were as follows :—

(1). " Robert and I went gunning." (American for shooting—an unlikely expression for Uncle Jerry to use) (p. 504). (2) About a ring (p. 508). (3). Getting locked into a room when they played at soldiers (p. 508). (4). A dog of Uncle Robert's named Fido (p. 509). (5). A friend called Charles Mason (p. 513). (6). A nephew Henry was stated definitely to be in Australia (p. 513). He was really in America. (7) Uncle Jerry's cane (p. 517). (8). An adventure on All Hallow's Eve (p. 517.) (9). A piece of statuary (p. 521). (10). A journey to Paris, etc. (p. 521). (11). Jewellery business (p. 521). (12). The Smith boys (pp. 521 and 542).

This last guess serves to introduce the mention of Smith's field and the cat-killing incident, which was first mentioned at a sitting on December 25th, 1889—the fourth sitting since Uncle Jerry's watch had been given to Mrs. Piper—as follows (vol. vi., p. 517) :—

Phinuit says, " And he remembers Bob killing the cat and tying its tail to the fence to see him kick before he died. He and Bob and a lot of the fellows all together, in Smith's field, I think he said. Bob knew Smith."

It will be noted that Uncle Robert was said to have killed the cat, and though Uncle Robert denied it, Phinuit stuck to the statement at a sitting on January 31st (p. 532). However, at the next sitting but one, on the evening of February 1st, Phinuit begins to hedge thus—" Oh, tell Sam, Jerry says he killed the cat " (p. 537)—and finally, on February 2nd, when Sir O. Lodge

told Phinuit that Uncle Frank remembered his brother Charles killing a cat, Phinuit shouted, "Charles it was! Yes, that's right. It was Charles" (p. 541).

It is perfectly true that there was a field at Barking, where Uncle Jerry and his brothers lived as boys, which was called Smith's field; but it is not apparent from Uncle Frank's letter which is supposed to verify the incident that the cat was killed in this Smith's field (*see* pp. 527, 557). In any case, Phinuit could hardly have given a name which was more likely to be right than the name of Smith, and it is to be noted that both Uncle Frank and Uncle Robert had no remembrance of any Smith *boys* in particular, though they knew by sight a publican named Smith who had children.

The snake-skin incident occurred at the third sitting in which Uncle Jerry appeared; for Phinuit ended the sitting by saying (p. 115):—

"To appreciate my advice is one thing, to remember me is another. Don't forget me, my boy. Jerry says, 'Do you know Bob's got a long skin—a skin like a snake's skin—upstairs, that Jerry got for him?' It's one of the funniest things you ever saw. Ask him to show it you. (Note E.) Oh, hear them talking, Captain!" *Note E.*—This episode of the skin is noteworthy. I (O.L.) cannot imagine that I ever had any knowledge of it. Here is my Uncle Robert's account of it when I asked him about it: "Yes, a crinkly thin skin, a curious thing; I had it in a box, I remember it well. Oh, as distinct as possible. Haven't seen it for years, but it was in a box with his name cut in it; the same box with some of his papers."

I must confess that this incident about the snake skin does not impress me personally with the need for any explanation other than that of a lucky guess, because I and my brothers have so often killed and skinned a snake, and at the present moment I can think of three or four such skins given away to boys or put away in a box somewhere.

Uncle Frank's fight was first mentioned at a sitting—the tenth in which there were references to Uncle Jerry—on February 3rd, 1890, when Uncle Jerry, after having been told by Sir O. Lodge the date and place where he used to teach as a mathematical master, said (vol. vi., p. 550):—

"Oh, oh yes. Yes, I used to teach there, and it was given me by the boys. It has been a tremendous job to remember it. Frank was full of life—full. . . . He crawled under the thatch once and hid. What a lot of mischief he was capable of doing. He would do anything. There was a family named Rodney. He pounded one of their boys named John. Frank got the best of it, and the boy ran; how he ran! His father threatened Frank, but he escaped; he always escaped. He could crawl through a smaller hole than another. He could shin up a tree quick as a monkey. What a boy he was! I remember his fishing. I remember that boy wading up to his middle. I thought he'd catch his death of cold, but he never did."

Uncle Frank, on being referred to, admitted (p. 557) having had a "fight with a boy in the cow field" when he was ten years old; and that the boy ran away on being beaten; but there was no verification of the name John Rodney nor of hiding under the thatch.

I have dealt with the case of Uncle Jerry at considerable length, because it is always being quoted in psychical literature as a piece of evidence conclusively proving telepathy or the spiritualistic hypothesis (according to the bias of the writer), and also because the reports are full enough to enable one to form a good opinion of how the information was given, and how much real knowledge of Uncle Jerry and his affairs Mrs. Piper's trance-personality possessed. I think I may fairly say that Phinuit had little or no knowledge, and that among a number of incorrect guesses the four vague statements just discussed were more likely to coincide with fact than not.

The remaining incidents will not now need so much discussion. The statement about *Charley and the bird* was as follows (vol. vi., p. 518) :—

Phin. : "Hm! How are you, Captain? You are all right. What have you done with Aunt Anne's ring? Well, give it to me. I told her all about that. She was very much pleased that you had kept it all that while. Very good thing, wasn't it? She said that she was very sorry that Charley ate the bird—the chicken—and made himself sick. He has had a trouble with his stomach. Her Charley. And he has been troubled for some little time. The bird made him sick. Some kind of bird. Quite sick. It troubled him a good deal. You write and ask him. But it is so. You will find it was. He will tell you. Was a little feverish with it. That's what is the matter." *O. L.* : "Anything else?" "Not particularly; and if you ask you will find it so. I tell you this because you don't know it, and that is the kind of thing you like."

Charley was Aunt Anne's nephew, and lived in Canada. His name had come up in connection with Aunt Anne at the end of a sitting on the previous day. The facts in reference to this incident are contained in a letter from a sister of Charley, who was living with him (vol. vi., p. 520) :—

"The boys shot a prairie hen as they were coming home one night, near the beginning of December, out of season, when there was a fine for killing these birds. So we had to hide it. It was hung for about a fortnight, and a few days before Christmas we ate it, Charley eating most. The bird didn't make him ill, but he was ill at the time, having the grippe. He went to town either that night or next day, and was certainly worse when he returned."

If this was a guess about Charley and the bird, it was perhaps less likely to fit the facts than the Uncle Jerry incidents; but, as in them, the details are quite inaccurate, for Charley was ill at the time before he ate the bird, It is interesting to find Phinuit

himself giving the reason why he suddenly and irrelevantly introduced the subject of Charley.

The incident of Mr. Deronco's brother painting a picture occurred in a sitting at Mr. Myers' house on December 1st, 1889 (p. 628).

" Mr. Deronco's brother was described as ' going into a large building where there are a lot of books ; then into an office-like place, with a desk in it and writing materials. A dark fellow, called John, with him, who is dishonest.' This was all wrong. Then, after much hesitation, the medium said that Mr. Deronco's brother was painting a picture. Asked : ' Are there many figures ? ' Dr. Phinuit said : ' I see one head ; it is side-face.' It appeared, after inquiry in Germany, that Mr. Deronco's brother ' was at that moment painting, and that the picture was really a portrait of Manfred, a single figure *en profil.*' "

As only a condensed report is given, it is impossible to judge how much fishing was employed and how many hints were given ; and it is to be noted that Phinuit often made a guessing suggestion that some one was painting or was fond of painting. In this case, he was told the guess was right by a leading question, which also implied there was a figure in the picture. As portraits are the commonest pictures with a figure in, the chances of a lucky guess was better for one figure than for any other number ; then it was even chances whether side-face or full-face would be a correct guess. It is also to be noted that here again the information was vague, and that no verifiable details as to the subject of the picture were given. All things considered, we may repeat the comment on this sitting printed at the end of the report—(" The statements in this sitting were mostly right ; if taken by themselves, they might possibly admit the supposition of chance success ")—substituting " certainly " for " possibly."

The incident of Dr. Rich's father's dizziness arose as follows. At the first sitting, at which Mrs. Thompson was present, (December 24th, 1889,) Phinuit, in the process of fishing, said (p. 509) :

" Do you know Richard, Rich, Mr. Rich ? " *Mrs. T.* : " Not well, I knew a Dr. Rich." (Note F.) *Phin.* : " That's him ; he's passed out. He sends kindest regards to his father." [*Note F.*—Met Dr. Rich (who died two years since) once, but hardly knew him, and his name was not Richard.]

That was all then ; but at Mrs. Piper's last séance in England on February 3rd, when Mrs. Thompson was again present, Phinuit irrelevantly said (vol. vi., p. 554) :

" Here's Dr. Rich. It is very kind of this gentleman (*i.e.*, Dr. Phinuit) to let me speak to you. Mr. Thompson, I want you to give a message to my father." *Mr. T.* : " I will give it." *Dr. R* : " Thank you a thousand times ; it is very good of you. You see, I passed out rather suddenly. Father was very much troubled about it, and he is troubled yet. He hasn't got over it. Tell him I am alive—that I send my love to him. Where are my glasses ? (feeling). I used to wear glasses. (True.) I think he has them and some of my books. There was a little black case I had, I think he has that too—I don't want that lost. Sometimes he is bothered about a dizzy feeling in

his head—nervous about it, but it is of no consequence." *Mr. T.*: "What does your father do?" *Dr. R.*: (while Mrs. Piper took up a card and appeared to write on it and pretended to put stamp in corner) "He attends to this sort of thing. Mr. Thompson, if you will give this message, I will help you in many ways. I can and I will." [Mr. Rich, sen., is head of Liverpool Post Office. His son, Dr. Rich, was almost a stranger to Mr. Thompson, and quite a stranger to me (O.L.). Mr. T. has since been to see him and given him the message. He considers the episode very extraordinary and inexplicable, except by fraud of some kind. The phrase, "Thank you a thousand times," he asserts to be characteristic, and he admits a recent slight dizziness. It is not easy to identify the "black case," but it is reported that on his death-bed his son frequently mentioned one. The only person able to give first-hand evidence is at present absent in Germany.]

It cannot be said that having "a dizzy feeling in the head" is an improbable or very detailed statement to make about any one. Most elderly people suffer from slight dizziness from time to time. The more detailed statement about the "black case" has never been verified as far as I know. Then it is to be noted that between December 24th and February 3rd Mrs. Piper must have had plenty of opportunities of hearing who was the head of the post-office in Liverpool, especially as she would be interested in the mails from America.

In Sir O. Lodge's first sitting on November 30th, 1889 (at Mr. Myers' house) occurred *the statement about the trouble in his son's leg* (vol, vi., p. 468) :—

Phin. : "It's the fourth from the baby that has the trouble in calf. It's a girl; no, I get confused. I will tell you directly. There's a baby, then a boy, then a girl, then a boy, then a boy fourth from baby that has trouble on right leg. That's his; it's a boy." *O.L.*: "Yes." (The one whom I (O.L.) had vaguely in mind does happen to be the fourth, but there was nothing really the matter when I got back. His heels still trouble him at times, rheumatic apparently.) (*Later note.*—The boy mentioned as having trouble in calf of leg may have had it latent, for he now complains of a good deal of pain in it and walks very little. It used to be in his heels, but is now in his left calf. I need hardly say that this is not a case of *propter hoc*; he had not been told anything about it, and only in editing the old notes do I perceive the coincidence.)

Here again the only detail mentioned was wrong. There was said to be trouble in the boy's right leg at the time. The only fact which can be squeezed in to fit is subsequent trouble in the left leg. Further, it is to be noted how Phinuit, while Mrs. Piper held Sir O. Lodge's hand, fished for the order of his children, making an incorrect guess about the sex of the child at first. And similarly, in this sitting, Phinuit quite failed to say what was the hobby of Sir O. Lodge's eldest son, which would have been somewhat of a test, as it was not only a very favourite pursuit but also an unusual one for a boy, namely architecture. The nearest Phinuit got to this was, "He takes an interest in natural things; is musical."

Lastly, *the incident of Mr. Gonner's mother* was an experiment

to test Mrs. Piper's powers of clairvoyance. Mr. Gonner had arranged with his sister that their mother should do something unusual for her (unknown, of course, to Mr. Gonner), at the time he had his sitting with Mrs. Piper. The act chosen was going out for a drive in a hansom at 11 a.m. Here is Phinuit's statement, which is usually referred to as a striking success (vol. vi., p. 488) :—

Phin. : " Your mother is very near me ; she's the one got trouble in head." *O.L.* : " Tell him about his mother and what she's doing now. It's very important." *Phin.* : " Ha, ha, ha ! I'll tell you why it's important, because he don't know it himself. I read your thoughts then. I can't generally. Your mother is just this minute fixing her hair, putting a thing through her hair (indicating) and putting it through her hair in a room with a cot in it, up high. Did you know she had some trouble with her head ? ("No.") Long distance between you and your mother; separation between you. She's in another place. (Yes, in London.) And who's William ? . . . Then I get——She's fixing something to her throat and putting on a wrap here, round here ; and now she has lifted up the lid of a box on a stand (11.30). She's pretty well, but had little trouble with head and stomach just a few hours ago, a little pain and indigestion ; she has taken hot drink for it. Within a day or two she heard of the death of a friend. . . . Your mother is going out."[2]

Here again the medium only made a correct statement in the vaguest way. The details were all wrong. There was no mention of a drive ; at 11.30 Mrs. Gonner was in a hansom when Phinuit said she was dressing herself for going out. Mrs. Gonner heard of the death of a friend a day or two after the sitting, but not before. The statement about Mrs. Gonner's head and indigestion was completely wrong. In short, it is rather doubtful if her statement can be called vaguely correct, and even Sir O. Lodge has to admit that the information only " gave the impression that ' going out ' was the thing selected to be done " (p. 529). And " going out " is not at the best a very improbable guess.

The above nine incidents (the case of Uncle Jerry counting as four), will have served, I hope, to show that Mrs. Piper's best successes are characterised by an absence of correct detail, and that it is reasonable to give the same explanation—namely, guessing—to them as to her very much greater number of failures in the cases where the statements made were outside the knowledge of the sitter and Mrs. Piper. However, there still remain for consideration a certain number of successes where the information was within the knowledge of the sitter.

It would be waste of time to apply statistical methods to " such discursive and indefinite accounts as the records of trance séances," seeing that the bias of the editor or sitter often largely determines whether a statement is to be considered a success or failure, and consequently I have not attempted to tabulate the results recorded in Volume VI. But the general impression left on me, after analysing them rather carefully, is that the failures are largely

in excess of the successes, and that the latter are comparatively few in number when cases of *obvious* fishing and guessing are excluded. There is a suggestive fact about Phinuit's demeanour which I have not yet touched upon, and it is that he sometimes showed, when he knew what he was talking about, a suspicious pride in marked contrast to his hesitating manner when he was getting at the facts by fishing, and very different to the irritable way in which he stuck to a statement when he had to make a guess that he suspected to be wrong—as in the pill-box experiment. The best example of this occurred in a sitting on December 29th, 1889, with Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Clarke and Mr. W. Leaf at Mr. Clarke's house, in which Phinuit told Mrs. Clarke, when the others had been turned out of the room and there was no reporter present, a number of facts about her relations in Germany, which might have been the best evidence for telepathy between Mrs. Piper and the sitter among all the records of Volume VI., if the sitting had been properly reported. (The notes were written down by Mrs. Clarke the same evening from memory.) As it is, it is impossible to tell how many hints Mrs. Clarke gave and how far Phinuit depended on fishing and on his knowledge of the sitter; for her identity had not been concealed from Mrs. Piper. Further, Mr. Clarke had had a sitting with Mrs. Piper in America three months before, and had crossed the Atlantic in November on the same boat, so that it is impossible to say that she cannot have picked up information by surreptitious means, such as reading letters or by hints unconsciously given by Mr. Clarke, who was distinctly biassed in favour of telepathy. For in his comments on his two sittings he does his best to squeeze in facts to fit the incorrect statements, and ends his notes as follows (p. 574): "A single success, exceeding the limits of coincidence (and it is undeniable that there are many such), proves the possibility; the multitude of failures merely indicate the difficulty and uncertainty," ignoring the difficulty of excluding all the fallacies we have discussed in § 2. The following extract from the report will indicate Phinuit's demeanour and the nature of the communication (vol. vi., p. 578):—

Phin.: "Now, how do you think I know this?" *Mrs. C.*: "I don't know." *Phin.*: "E. told me." . . . *Phin.*: "Now, what do you think of this? Don't you think I can tell you many things? You just ask about anybody you like, and I'll tell you." (*Note.*—It struck me how desirous this secondary personality was that its communications should be considered extraordinary. Evidently suffering under the failure in satisfying the envelope tests, it had begun by asking me: "Do you think I am a fool?"—A.C.) *Mrs. C.*: "Tell me about my childhood." *Phin.*: "Shall I tell you how you ran away (chuckling) with that man—that boy, I mean? You were a little devil to do that. It worried your mother almost to death." (*Note.*—When five years old, I rambled off with two boys, staying hours away from home, an event which, in my family, is jestingly referred to as my

running away.—A.C.) *Phin.* : " When you came back, you kept away from your mother." *Mrs. C.* : " Did I feel ashamed ? " *Phin.* : " Not exactly; but when you have run away, you do keep away from your mother." *Mrs. C.* : " Tell me about my schooldays." *Phin.* : " Oh, you were a little devil at school. (Wrong—J.T.C.) There was a fat teacher. (Not identifiable.) And there was a girl called Florence with red hair." *Mrs. C.* : " I don't remember her." *Phin.* : " No ? But you do remember having run away with that boy. There's Fred—Alfred, that was the name of the boy. (*Mrs. C.* : " No.") And who is E.—no, that is not it, E.H. ? " (giving correct names, both family and Christian) (W.L. and J.T.C. enter the room.) " Shall I tell Walter what I have told you ? (" Yes.") I told her she has a cousin E. in the spirit who passed out by accident, not purposely ; he put a knife through his heart. He was rather insane. He got it through his father ; he was insane too. He has got a sister M. in the body, she is a little lame. And his mother is concerned about the loss of him, because he took his own life by accident, and he wants to send a message that he did not do it purposely, but because he could not help it. He says, ' For Heaven's sake tell her so quick.' There's nothing the matter with the rest of them ; they will get on all right. Then she has got an aunt M. in the spirit that has got a husband in the body. He has got some children and sons, and she has passed out and he has married her sister. He married her sister, and two brothers married two sisters. E. and M. are sisters, and both are sisters of E. This little devil ran away at one time when she was a little girl—ran away with a boy, and worried the mother almost to death. Then she got ashamed of it afterwards. E. does not seem to be with the other spirits much. He is with his father, and he and his father stay with one another. . . . "

It will be seen that here again incorrect details were given about Mrs. Clarke's childhood ; and the first guess about running away was only partially got correct by substituting " boy " for " man." Further, the whole sitting was full of wrong statements, such as the number of Mrs. Clarke's brothers, the name of her sister, etc. Also Phinuit's device of getting Mr. W. Leaf out of the room while he was talking to Mrs. Clarke, although he afterwards was quite anxious that Mr. Leaf should know the nature of the communication, looks to me highly suspicious. And lastly, the reason given by Phinuit for the presence of the dead cousin E. is by no means convincing, as it is far too much like the reflection in Mrs. Piper's mind of the popular idea about the remorse and restlessness of persons who have committed suicide.

As the above case is about the best example of Mrs. Piper's success in giving information known to her sitter, I see no reason for invoking telepathy as an explanation of these cases, especially as in many of them there are equally good reasons for attributing the success to lucky guessing, as in the other incidents we discussed previously. Thus the nearest approach to a real success in Prof. Richet's sitting, as he himself pointed out, was the name of his dog being given as *Pick* when it should have been *Dick*. Otherwise all the guesses were wrong. For if with such as Mr. Clarke we accept the correct statements as proof of telepathy and reject

the wrong statements, given with identical assurance, as merely indicating the difficulty of the process, we can hardly claim to be weighing the evidence with scientific impartiality.

§ 5. Conclusions.

I need not now give any more examples of Mrs. Piper's powers of reading her sitter's thoughts, as I have already given so many illustrations; and so at last we are in a position to sum up the significance of the evidence. It will have been noticed both from the remarks I have made and the examples illustrating them, what difficulties there are about giving telepathy as an explanation. But, in the words of Prof. James, "the limitations of her trance-information, its discontinuity and fitfulness, and its apparent inability to develop beyond a certain point, although they end by rousing one's moral and human impatience with the phenomenon, yet are, from a scientific point of view, amongst its most interesting peculiarities, since where there are limits there are conditions, and the discovery of these is always the beginning of explanation" (vol. vi., p. 659). Now, what are the conditions? Clearly, an opportunity for utilising knowledge gained by fishing and guessing, by muscle-reading, by hints given during, before, or between sittings, by the surreptitious use of her senses, by inquiries in the intervals of a series of sittings, by drawing on the stores of a remarkably good memory, or by a combination of the above where possible. Consequently, taking into consideration the origin and course of her mediumship, the only explanation which appears to me to be consistent with the conditions is some hypothesis, which includes a combination of some or all the above methods of reading thoughts. This hypothesis, for want of a better name, is usually called "thought-reading."

The chief difficulty which telepathists seem to find about accepting thought-reading as an adequate explanation is that in thought-reading experiments it is said to be necessary to concentrate the attention on the thought, and that in many of Mrs. Piper's sittings the information given was only subconsciously present in the sitter's mind. But muscle-reading is essentially based on an unconscious emotional manifestation. Thus, in Mr. Capper's demonstrations of thought-reading, he states that he only can succeed if the "agent" *cares sufficiently about the result* to concentrate his mind on the chosen action. And though the emotional associations of our subconscious thoughts do not usually evoke any marked muscular manifestations, yet emotional associations are themselves essentially subconscious, so that blushing, erection of the hair, tears and smiles, may sometimes be observed when thoughts associated respectively with shame, fear, humour and sorrow are not consciously present in the mind. Further, as in hypno-

tism hyperasthesia of the senses can be induced, there is a certain amount of experimental basis for considering that Mrs. Piper in her trance may have the faculty for reading the subconscious thoughts of her sitters by their emotional manifestations, a faculty doubtless sharpened by practice. This sort of thought-transference may be compared to the power which Sir O. Lodge's Austrian friends possessed of naming the cards drawn at random from a pack, when they held each other's hands, a power which completely vanished when a sheet of paper was interposed between their hands (*see* "Survival of Man," p. 58). In short, muscle-reading may not unreasonably be considered an adequate explanation when assisted by guessing, fishing, hints from a biassed sitter, and all the other contrivances of successful mediumship.

Now, as it is clear that the sitter's thoughts are transferred, and as it is easy to demonstrate that under normal conditions this is possible by muscle-reading, the simplest explanation of Mrs. Piper's powers undoubtedly consists in extending a *vera causa* like this to cover her case. If, however, it be objected that we have no experimental evidence for such a complicated form of the process, I reply that we have all the records of trance-mediums for the past fifty years and more, most of whom have shown the nature of their powers by indulging in physical phenomena. Further, in order to avoid the appearance of arguing in a circle, I would lay stress *first* on the reasons I have just given for admitting the possibility of divining subconscious thoughts by so-called muscle-reading, and *secondly*, on the fact that it is certain that muscle-reading was employed in a large number of Mrs. Piper's sittings. Consequently it is reasonable to extend this recognised method of hers to the more difficult cases where the other fallacies discussed in §§ 2 and 3 apparently can be excluded. For if Mrs. Piper had real powers of telepathy, there is no reason why she should be dependent on holding the sitter's hand, and avoid having the sitter on the other side of a screen or in another room.

My deliberate conclusion, then, is that probability is least strained, if we explain Mrs. Piper's powers by a combination of chance and skill rather than by telepathy or "spirit-control."

This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that in recent years the psychical researchers have shown signs of splitting into two camps; those who believe in telepathy, headed by Podmore, and those who believe in the spiritualistic hypothesis, headed by Prof. Barrett and Sir O. Lodge. The latter party are quite clear that there is no experimental evidence to support Podmore's telepathic explanation of some of the statements made by the Piper-Myers and Piper-Hodgson controls, and of some of the cases of cross-correspondence, and strongly insist on the difficulties associated with a telepathic explanation. Thus Sir O. Lodge says, "It ought to be constantly borne in mind that this kind

of thought-transference without consciously active agency has never been experimentally proved" (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. vi., p. 453), and Miss Dallas devotes several pages to showing the unreasonableness of giving a telepathic explanation ("Mors Janua Vitæ," pp. 67-74). Podmore himself, while holding telepathy to be a reasonable surmise, admitted the absence of any experimental basis. Thus he writes, "The only hypothetical element involved is the action of telepathy itself. It must not, however, be overlooked that the hypothesis of telepathy is founded on actual experiments, and that there is little direct experimental evidence for the complicated procedure here supposed" ("The Newer Spiritualism," p. 274; *see also* p. 311). After these admissions, I need not myself labour the point about the difficulties associated with telepathy; though I do not admit that there is any satisfactory experimental proof at present for telepathy of any kind, as I have tried to show in Appendices J and R.

On the other hand, it will be as well, perhaps, to recapitulate the reasons why the spiritualistic hypothesis is untenable. They are as follows:

1. Mrs. Piper's controls have no clairvoyant powers, in spite of the fact that at first the "spirits" themselves, like the late Mr. E., urged the importance of trying such experiments as that with unknown letters of the alphabet in a sealed box (p. 493).

2. Mrs. Piper's controls have always failed to answer test-questions. It is only information volunteered by themselves which is sometimes correct.

3. The manner of evading test questions is often highly suspicious.

4. One of the main supports of the hypothesis is that the impersonations manifest "emotional remembrances and desires and intelligence characteristic of the alleged communicators, and urging further toward higher aspiration and noble deeds, and constantly affirming their independent existence" (vol. xiii., p. 395); but this is just where bias comes in, and the facts often point quite the other way. Thus, we have seen how Edmund Gurney's "spirit" used absolutely uncharacteristic expressions to Sir O. Lodge and made Prof. James admit a complete absence of inner verisimilitude in the personation. Then again, as Podmore has pointed out, the Verrall-Myers control is an intelligence showing no identity with the Piper-Myers control ("The Newer Spiritualism," p. 254).

5. There is no consistency between the messages given by different spirits. Thus the Edmund Gurney control says that mediums look like balls of light, while the "late Mr. Wilson" expresses surprise on being told by Sir O. Lodge that Mrs. Piper is a medium (vol. vi., p. 543).

6. The ideas expressed by the controls about the constitution of the "spirit" world are exactly like a reflexion in Mrs. Piper's mind of popular ideas on the subject.

7. The controls are always making predictions, which are almost invariably wrong, and certainly show no insight greater than the ordinary mortal's power of guessing.

8. The information given about the sitter's living friends was, generally speaking—at any rate in the sittings recorded in Volume VI.—as vivid and correct as about the dead. Now, we have seen that Mrs. Piper's "controls" have absolutely no clairvoyant powers. Therefore, if Phinuit obtained his information about the dead from "spirits," he also obtained information about the living by thought-transference; and yet "there is no means, as a rule, of discriminating between them, either as regards substance or source—that is, the statements about the dead and the living alike are given as if they proceeded directly from Phinuit's own knowledge" ("The Newer Spiritualism," p. 171).

9. The fact that Myers, Gurney, and Hodgson are supposed to be able to communicate through Mrs. Verrall and Mrs. Holland, etc., makes the difficulty of spirits communicating through Mrs. Piper, except with the help of Phinuit or Rector, quite unintelligible, and suggests that it is only a device for confusing the issue and concealing ignorance.

10. It is now generally recognised that the Phinuit impersonation was wholly the creation of the medium's dream consciousness. Yet the other controls, whose impersonations are supposed to be characterised by a real verisimilitude, endorse Phinuit's claims to a substantial existence, thus casting suspicion on their own origin.

11. The importance attached by Mrs. Piper, at any rate in her earlier sittings, to holding some object of the deceased in her hand, does not strengthen the claims of the spirits who came in response thereto, for it reminds us too much of the genii of the "Arabian Nights" who had to come when a ring or lamp was rubbed, and suggests that it is but a contrivance of successful mediumship like the hazel-stick of the water-dowser; for some of the most successful water-dowsers admit that having a stick is superfluous. Yet the "spirits" themselves have endorsed the importance of this device, and so force us to suspect their genuineness. Thus the "late Mr. Wilson" said to Sir O. Lodge, "I should not have been here but for this chain" (vol. vi., p. 543).

12. The spirits of Edmund Gurney, Hodgson, and Myers, etc., are supposed at last to be producing scientific evidence of spiritual existence by giving correct information outside the sitter's and

medium's knowledge, and by inspiring cross-correspondences; yet, if so, it is surprising that none of their equally intelligent predecessors had succeeded in doing so, although mediums had not been lacking. Further; if the contents of any of the test-letters had been given, so much trouble would have been saved both to themselves in inventing less decisive tests, and to their living colleagues in finding explanations for their failures!

Before I conclude, a few remarks about cross-correspondences may not be out of place, (although I have not made any detailed study of the subject,) as not only is it closely bound up with Mrs. Piper's mediumship, but also it enables me to correct any false impression I may have given at the end of § 1 of this essay, when I remarked that Podmore had made out a superficially plausible case for telepathy in the "*sevens incident.*" For the sake of the uninitiated, perhaps I should explain that a cross-correspondence consists in a real or supposed similarity of wording or idea between the scripts of two or more automatic writers or the writings and utterances of a medium like Mrs. Piper. It is a very difficult and complicated subject, so that I owe a great debt of gratitude to Mr. Podmore for elucidating the evidence in his book "The Newer Spiritualism," written just before his death last year. Now, as he was eminently qualified, by his training and industry in examining the records, to express an authoritative opinion, I do not apologise for supporting my argument almost entirely by quotations from him rather than from the original documents themselves. It will simplify my remarks if I make it clear from the outset that, in his opinion, cases of cross-correspondence may be divided into (A) The great majority of cases in which the "coincidences of thought and expression are sufficiently explained by the natural associations of ideas in minds preoccupied with the same themes, aided by occasional telepathic interaction amongst the automatists themselves" ("The Newer Spiritualism," p. 254); and (B) a few cases, like the "Lethe incident," the "sevens incident" and references to the First Book of the Æneid and Agamemnon of Aeschylus, which are not so easily explained by telepathy, and lend support to the spiritualistic hypothesis. But, in any case, he insists on the difficulty of coming to a decision in these cases, as the following passage shows:—"The explanation, then, must be admitted to involve many and serious improbabilities. But I feel that the improbabilities in any of the suggested alternatives are at least equally serious. The wisest counsel, if also the most difficult to follow, is to hold our judgment in suspense" (*loc. cit.*, p. 267). I do not propose to examine the evidence myself, beyond inquiring whether, in a case of such difficulty, it is not possible to find an explanation by a combination of chance-coincidence between the ideas of "minds preoccupied with the same

themes" with biassed interpretation on the part of the sitter or editor of automatic script, with muscle-reading, with hints and all the other aids to successful thought-transference discussed throughout this essay.

Taking these points in reverse order: *First*, it is noteworthy that a successful case like the "Lethe incident" took at least five sittings to mature. Then, Podmore, in his commentary on another incident, the transmission of a Latin message to the Myers' control through Mrs. Piper, has pointed out that there is good reason for suspecting the medium of having used a dictionary (*loc. cit.*, p. 253). This success also took four months to mature. *Secondly*, as regards hints and the bias of the sitter, one could not have a better example of the way some séances were conducted than in the following account given by Podmore of how the "Browning, Hope, Star" incident was supposed to be a practical answer to the Latin message given through Mrs. Piper to "Rector" for transmission to Myers, asking him to show that he understood it by inspiring a cross-correspondence.

"On February 20th there occurred the first attempt at translation. On February 27th occurred the two other attempts above quoted. In the interval between these two later attempts the control remarked: 'I believe . . . I have sufficiently replied to your various questions to convince the ordinary scientific mind. . . .' Mr. Piddington, referring to this statement, said later in the séance to the control: 'You say you have replied. Tell me in what messages your reply is given.' The control, in answer, refers successively to the 'poems,' 'halcyon days,' 'evangelic,' 'shrub,' 'syringa,' 'the poems and cross-correspondence messages.' Mr. Piddington then asks, 'What poems?' The control replies, 'My own, Browning . . . Horace.' At the control's request Mr. Piddington repeats the last utterance, and the control continues: 'Yes, chiefly Browning's lines as given through Mrs. Verrall and another, which I referred to before.' Mr. Piddington then tells the control: 'I want to say that you have given, I believe, an answer worthy of your intelligence—not to-day, I mean, but some time back; but the interpretation must not be mine. You must explain your answer (through Mrs. Piper). You could do it in two words.'

"The control replies: 'Hope, Star.' *Mr. Piddington:* 'Well? Yes?' *The control:* 'Browning.' Mr. Piddington then tells the control: 'In telling me that Browning, Hope and Star contains your answer to the Latin message, you have given an answer which to me is both intelligible and clear.' (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. xxii., pp. 320-331.)

"It is hardly necessary to say that, after the last explicit statement by Mr. Piddington, no later reference to the connection of the Latin message with 'Hope, Star and Browning' could possess much evidential value. But, in fact, it does not appear that, despite the strong hint given, the trance intelligence did advance much further in connecting the two ideas." ("The Newer Spiritualism," pp. 251-2.)

I need hardly say that Mrs. Piper was well aware of the object of the experiments carried out in the seventy-four trance sittings she gave between November 10th, 1906, and June 2nd, 1907, in England, when she was invited over from America to

help in the elucidation of cross-correspondences. Further, Mrs. Piper, from having stayed with Mr. Myers in previous years, must have been well aware of his fondness for poetry, and possibly of his actual tastes.

Thirdly, as regards muscle-reading, there is a particularly interesting case. A cross-correspondence was supposed to have taken place on January 16th, 1907, when Mrs. Piper's controls gave "steeple" as an idea or word which had occurred in the script of Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. Verrall. This was not in accordance with fact, but Mr. Piddington the sitter thought that it was the case. Consequently the idea of steeple seems certainly to have been transferred from Mr. Piddington's mind to Mrs. Piper. The explanation must be identical with the explanation of Mrs. Piper's powers we have already considered.

Fourthly, as regards the coincidences of thought and expression between minds preoccupied with the same themes, I must refer the reader to pp. 242-254 of "The Newer Spiritualism," where Podmore proves that there is design behind the cross-correspondences; but that it is derived from the automatist's own secondary personality, and that "it has been proved that, in some cases at any rate, this characteristic indirectness of phrasing is due to the efforts of the subconscious personality apparently aiming to produce the kind of evidence required" (*loc. cit.*, p. 245).

Fifthly, as regards the source of the automatist's script, it has been shown in some cases—in that of Mrs. Holland for instance—that there are "many instances in which these automatic impersonations have clearly owed characteristic details to information recently acquired by the normal self from books and newspaper articles" (p. 205), and Podmore gives several examples by way of illustration.

Sixthly, as regards the results, the same incorrectness of detail is to be noted as in the earlier Piper sittings. The Hodgson control of Mrs. Holland wrote about a "gold watch-chain with a horseshoe-shaped cigar-cutter attached to it"; only the cigar-cutter was not horse-shoe shaped. In the same script K. 57 occurred, which, if it had been K. 52, would have been a really striking coincidence. In the *Lethe incident* C-Y-X (afterwards written as CYNX, SCYX, CSYX), was uttered instead of CEYX; similarly, "an indistinct word, recorded by Mr. Dorr as 'pavia,' was uttered instead of 'papavera'" (pp. 256, 257). Thus, in practically every cross-correspondence, there is vagueness and incorrectness of detail, allowing plenty of room for biassed interpretation; and this brings us back once more to Podmore's explanation of the "sevens incident."

The "sevens incident," it will be remembered, consisted of a variety of references to or images of the number "seven," which

occurred in the script of six automatists between April 20th, 1908, and July 24th, 1908; and Podmore showed that, if any other explanation than chance coincidence is required, the most probable explanation would be telepathy between the automatists and the mind of Mr. Piddington, (with whom the number "7" was a kind of *tic*,) as he had actually written a test-letter, to be opened after his death, which was all about the number "seven." But here, I think, Podmore shows his bias; for, in trying to establish the existence of a reciprocal influence among seven automatists in reference to the number "seven," he not only has to make up his number by adding Mr. Piddington to the six genuine automatists, although Mr. Piddington had written his letter four years before, but also he quotes in the evidence a dream of Mrs. Holland, one of the automatists, about the number six, as if a small discrepancy like this did not count. Further, his whole explanation of the incident is marked by surmise, for which there is no experimental justification, for instance:—

"Mrs. Verrall, then, apparently a much more powerful telepathic agent than Mr. Piddington, swells the stream of telepathic influence, and the effects, in the five remaining automatists, rise to the surface of the dream consciousness. The particular form which the transmitted idea assumes in each particular case is determined partly, perhaps, by the relative susceptibility of the subject to the two streams of telepathic influence. But it is in the main, no doubt, a result of the normal association of ideas." ("The Newer Spiritualism," p. 273.)

In my opinion, then, chance-coincidence between the scripts of minds occupied with the same themes is an adequate explanation, especially when it is considered that the same scripts contained at least three references to figures other than the number "seven" and that there was considerable communication between some of the automatists.

And now I have finished my remarks about cross-correspondences, which do not profess to be a serious critique of this difficult subject; but I hope the reader will feel there is some justification for them, if I have succeeded in showing not only the affinities existing between these later phenomena and Mrs. Piper's earlier trance-utterances, but also the difficulty of explaining them either by telepathy or by the spiritualistic hypothesis or by a combination of the two. I am well aware how small a part of the Piper-records are contained in the sixth volume of the *Proceedings of the S.P.R.*, and I fear that my knowledge of the subject must appear very superficial to some "earnest students of psychical research"; but I am confident that, if Mrs. Piper possessed supernormal powers, she would have been able to give some clear evidence of them in the course of the eighty-three sittings therein recorded.

§ 6. VERIFICATION OF CONCLUSIONS.

One of the last and most important of Mrs. Piper's controls was the intelligence purporting to be the spirit of the late Dr. Richard Hodgson, and great hopes were held that, as Dr. Hodgson had devoted the last twenty years of his life to the problems of psychical research, valuable results would be obtained. But so far from these hopes being fulfilled, the evidential tests and proofs of identity afforded by the control were unsatisfactory in the extreme; and Prof. James' report on the Piper-Hodgson control in the twenty-third volume of the *Proceedings of the S.P.R.*, already referred to, materially strengthens the conclusions to which I have come. For it recognises, in several passages of which the following quotations are typical, the insuperable difficulty of excluding objective fallacies:—

"The total amount of truthful information communicated by the R.H. control to the various sitters is copious. He reminds them, for the most part, of events—usually unimportant ones—which they and the living R.H. had experienced together. Taking any one of these events singly, it is never possible in principle to exclude explanations 1 and 4 (viz., lucky chance-hits and information received from R.H., during his life-time, by the waking Mrs. Piper, and stored up . . . in her memory)." (vol. xxiii., p. 5).

"Taking these Hodgson-records in detail, and subjecting their incidents to a piecemeal criticism, such an explanation (viz., a mixture of fraud, sub-conscious personation, lucky accident, and telepathy), does seem practically possible everywhere; so, as long as we confine ourselves to the mere logic of presumption, the conclusion against the spirits holds good" (p. 34).

"The content of the Hodgson material is no more veridical than is a lot of earlier Piper material, especially in the days of the old Phinuit control. And it is, as I began by saying, vastly more leaky and susceptible of naturalistic explanation than is any body of Piper material recorded before" (p. 121).

This report deals with sixty-nine sittings, held in America between December 28th, 1905, and January 1st, 1908, so that it includes a considerable variety of material, and gives one a good idea of Mrs. Piper's methods in recent years. I therefore feel that a short review of her present powers, supplementing my lengthy criticism of her earlier trance-phenomena, will not be out of place, especially as Prof. James expresses a wish, towards the end of his report, that he could know just how all the documents he was exhibiting therein would strike "readers who are either novices in the field or who consider the subject in general to be pure 'rot' or 'bosh.'" While disclaiming the latter attitude—as I consider the Piper records of extreme psychological interest for the light they throw not only on the phenomena exhibited by trance-intelligences, but also on the mistakes which sitters untrained in experimental psychology are continually making—I think I may fairly call myself a novice; and so I

propose to finish this essay by giving my impressions, though he, unfortunately, is no longer alive to criticise them.

The points which chiefly strike me are three in number.

(1) *There is a marked similarity between these sittings and those recorded in the sixth volume.* Thus, there is the same tendency to assure sitters that there is a God, and to talk about the spirit-world and about the honesty of other mediums and the nature of a "light." The notions expressed about the nature and occupations of spirits are still somewhat crude, for we are told that spirits live in houses but do not wear clothes. Also the R.H. control commits himself to the statements that Rector is a distinct entity, that his management of Mrs. Piper is necessary, and that the spirits employ on their side as well a spiritual medium named "Prudens." He further pretends to have lost all sense of time and not to understand what "seven minutes" mean.

On the other hand, the trance-intelligence shows, to my mind, distinct signs of progress in its acquaintance with psychical research. "Luminiferous ether" now does duty for "electricity," and the difficulties of communicating are explained by a comparison to those of a conversation over the telephone. Likewise, the trance-personality adopts an expert's tone towards the sitters, and sometimes criticises the way they conduct a sitting—(*e.g.*, "It is never the way to get the best results by peppering with questions. Intelligences come with minds filled, and questions often put everything out of their thought" (p. 102))—or makes a comment on the record suggestive of Mrs. Piper's subconscious interest in the result, as for instance when the R.H. control said —in reference to his inability to answer a simple question about a visit to his lodgings—"Capital, that is good! Lodge and Piddington consider it good when I can't remember what did not happen" (vol. xxiii., p. 103).

Fishing and guessing are perhaps not such marked features as in the earlier sittings, and the control is usually wary when asking a sitter, who wants an evidential proof of R.H.'s identity, "Do you remember so-and-so?" not to mention anything more definite than swimming, boating, smoking or having a drink, looking at a view, etc. But there is still a striking difference between the success of the statements volunteered by the control and those given in answer to test questions. Of the latter, not a single one can be called certainly successful, while of the former, dealing with names and facts like the words of a song which would tend to impress a sitter, the greater number—perhaps 90 per cent.—are successful. Now, the important point to note is that here, in nearly every case, the name or fact can be shown to have been known to Mrs. Piper, or to have been mentioned to other controls at some previous sitting; and in the remaining few the possibility that such was the case cannot be excluded.

Thus at a sitting on July 2nd, 1906, Mr. Dorr, endeavouring to extract some names from the control which Dr. Hodgson must have known very well, tried to get the name of the man who occupied the farmhouse at which Dr. Hodgson used generally to sleep when staying at "Oldfarm." The control, however, was not able to give this name, but volunteered instead the name of the gardener, Miller. "Is it possible," Mr. Dorr writes, "that Mrs. Piper may have heard of Miller's name as that of the manager of my plant-nurseries at Bar-Harbor? I remember I once meant to send her some plants from the nurseries for her garden, and think it probable they went. It is also possible that the name may have come up at the trance in my own past sittings" (vol. xxiii., p. 44).

(2) *Talking to the supposed "spirit of R.H." seems to me to have had a remarkable influence on the sitters*, an influence which is admirably expressed by Prof. James in the following words, where he points out the difference between reading the record of a Piper sitting and playing an active part in the conversation recorded: "The whole talk gets warmed with your own warmth, and takes on the reality of your own part in it; its confusions and defects you charge to the imperfect conditions, while you credit the successes to the genuineness of the communicating spirit. These consequently loom more in our memory, and give the key to our dramatic interpretation of the phenomenon. But a sitting that thus seemed important at the time may greatly shrink in value on a cold re-reading, and if read by a non-participant, it may seem thin and almost insignificant" (p. 32). The result is that a large number of incidents, each of which is evidentially weak, "will almost always produce a cumulative effect on the mind of a sitter whose affairs they implicate, and dispose him to the spiritistic view. It grows first possible, then plausible, then natural, and finally probable in a high degree" (vol. xxiii., p. 18).

Of all the sitters mentioned in Prof. James' report, not one escapes, in my opinion, from showing signs of this influence—a fact which would be a grave defect in any serious research in experimental psychology—but the ladies seem especially prone to forget that the phenomena are still *sub judice*, and that they forfeit the title of serious students and critics of psychic research when they ask leading questions, give hints to the trance personality, and interpret the record according to their preconceived wishes instead of attributing the ordinary meaning to the words used by the control. In illustration of this tendency I might quote a dozen or more examples; but the following three must suffice.

(*a*.) At a sitting on February 5th, 1906, with Miss Pope, the R.H.-control wrote a poem for Margaret Bancroft, and added the message, "To Margaret Bancroft. Give her this. She has light. . . ." The record continues: *Miss P.:* "Yes. Is this your own?" *R.H.:* "I just made it for her. . . . Tell her I shall never forget those hills, the water, our talks, and the delightful visit I had with her." (Correct.—W.J.) *Miss P.:* "I think she is coming soon to speak with

you here." *R.H.* : " Good. I hope so. Will you tell her, give her my message, ask her if she knows anything about my watch being stopped. Do you ? I must go and get a little breath." (Miss B. writes : " I think the watch means *my* watch. We had a number of jokes about the frequent stopping of my watch.") (vol. xxiii., p. 11).

(*b*.) At a sitting on June 5th, 1906, with Mr. Dorr, the R.H.-control, asked if he remembered where he used to sleep at " Oldfarm," replied : " Out in the little house just across the yard, where we used to go and smoke." To which Mr. Dorr appends the following comment, " His recollection also of the little house is *good*. The *only* mistake in reference to it is in speaking of it as ' across the yard,' it being, in fact, across the lawn and garden, upon a hillside opposite the house. . . . " (vol. xxiii., p. 40). The italics are mine.

(*c*.) At a sitting with Dr. Bayley in April, 1906, a test question about the words of a song was put, and, instead of the question being answered, the words of another song, known to Mrs. Piper, were given as follows : *Dr. B.* : " Now, Dick, do you remember some of the words of the song which we all sang so much, and which you brought there last summer ? " *R.H.* : " Song ? awful ! Song ? " *Dr. B.* : " It begins, ' Come, I will sing you.' " *R.H.* : " Oh, yes !—gone out of my head like a shot ! " *Dr. B.* : " Yes, Dick." *R.H.* : " Listen ; let me tell you something. Do you remember a little song I sang to the children, which went like this : ' Little Popsey Wopsey . . . Chickey Biddy Chum . . . all . . . I am tired.' " *Dr. B.* : " Dick, that was splendid ; I remember it well." (Known also to Mrs. Piper.—W.J.) *R.H.* : " Do you remember my palming tricks ? " *Dr. B.* " Yes." (Known also to Mrs. Piper.—W.J.) *R.H.* : " And how you all seemed to enjoy them ? . . . I am getting clearer since I have met you here. It helps in recalling many things I had almost forgotten. Listen ; do you remember my recitation of a Hindoo ? " *Dr. B.* : " No, I don't remember that." *R.H.* : " Which reads like this : ' I think till I'm weary of thinking . . . ' " *Dr. B.* : " Yes, I know that well." (Known also to Mrs. Piper.—W.J.) (pp. 55,56).

Is it now unfair to criticise Dr. Bayley's enthusiasm in thinking R.H.'s knowledge of the song " Popsey Wopsey " was *splendid*, when he failed to recall the song he was asked for, the words of which he had himself taught his friends only the previous summer ?

Now, it is important to recognise the influence which conversation with Mrs. Piper's controls has on her sitters in helping to form what Prof. James calls " the dramatic hypothesis " when searching for the most probable explanation of the Piper-phenomena. For the most cogent argument I know in favour of the spiritistic hypothesis is that Dr. Hodgson, after studying the subject for more than fifteen years, ended by fully believing in the reality of spiritual control ; and it is obvious that Prof. James felt the same force in this argument when he wrote, " It is true that I still believe the ' Imperator-band ' to be fictitious entities, while Hodgson ended by accepting them as real ; but as to the general probability of there being real communicators somewhere in the mass, I cannot be deaf to Hodgson's able discussion, or fail to feel the authority which his enormous experience gave to his opinion in this particular field " (p. 29). On the other hand, its cogency is enormously lessened if we remember that though Dr. Hodgson's

attitude may have been quite unbiassed when he first commenced his study of Mrs. Piper, yet, as he continued to take part in sittings year after year, he can hardly have escaped the cumulative influence of carrying on conversations with controls purporting to be spirits. Now, there are two points in this report which show how Dr. Hodgson's critical capacity was warped by too long and personal a contact with the phenomena. The first is not perhaps of greater importance than as a straw showing which way his bias was taking him, but the second is of extreme significance. Prof. James, in the first page of his report, tells us that "Hodgson had often, during his lifetime, laughingly said that if he ever passed over and Mrs. Piper was still officiating here below, he would control her better than she had ever yet been controlled in her trances, because he was so thoroughly familiar with the difficulties and conditions on this side." But, as already explained, the Hodgson control is a "particularly poor" case for "testing the claim that Mrs. Piper is possessed during her trances by the spirits of our departed friends," owing to the fact that so much information from Dr. Hodgson has been acquired by Mrs. Piper either normally or in the trance state. Consequently it seems fair to me to make the criticism that Dr. Hodgson would never have made this remark if he had *fully* realised the fallacies which were necessarily introduced by his close intercourse with Mrs. Piper.

The fact of grave significance is this: that, when Dr. Hodgson made a proposal of marriage to a Miss Densmore (pseudonym) in 1895 and was refused, he consulted the Piper controls in his disappointment. This action, almost comparable to that of King Saul when he had recourse to the aid of the witch of Endor, is a fairly conclusive proof of the practical reality of Dr. Hodgson's bias ten years before his death. For, when spiritual controls are consulted in a delicate personal matter, a calm scientific judgment such as is required in the difficult problems of psychic research can hardly be exercised any more satisfactorily than was done by Sir W. Crookes in the famous séance at Hackney, when he embraced what he believed to be a materialised spirit.

So much for Dr. Hodgson's bias. But this case of Miss Densmore introduces a further interesting reflection, namely, whether Prof. James himself can have escaped the influence of pseudo-reality which the habit of engaging in conversation with spiritual controls appears bound to produce. For the whole of his report shows undoubted vacillation between the spiritistic hypothesis and that of fraud, personation, telepathy or lucky guessing.

Thus, on the one hand, he wrote *à propos* of the Huldah-Densmore incident:

"The possibility of the more naturalistic explanation doesn't make the supernatural one impossible; and if spirit-return were already made probable by other evidence, this might well be taken as a case of it too. But what I am sifting these records for is *independent*

evidence of such return; and so long as the record in this instance lends itself so plausibly to a naturalistic explanation, I think we must refuse to interpret it in the spiritistic way" (p. 25); and again: "It seems to me not impossible that a bosh-philosopher here or there may get a dramatic impression of there being something genuine behind it all. Most of those who remain faithful to the 'bosh' interpretation would, however, find plenty of comfort if they had the entire mass of records given them to read. Not that I have left things out (I certainly have tried not to!) that would, if printed, discredit the detail of what I cite, but I have left out, by not citing the whole mass of records, so much mere mannerism, so much repetition, hesitation, irrelevance, unintelligibility, so much obvious groping and fishing and plausible covering up of tracks, so much false pretension to power, and real obedience to suggestion, that the stream of veridicality that runs through the whole gets lost, as it were, in a marsh of feebleness, and the total dramatic effect on the mind may be little more than the word 'humbug.' The really significant items disappear in the total bulk. 'Pass words,' for example, and sealed messages are given in abundance, but can't be found. . . . Preposterous Latin sentences are written. . . . Poetry gushes out, but how can one be sure that Mrs. Piper never knew it? The weak talk of the Imperator-band about *time* is reproduced, as where R.H. pretends that he no longer knows what 'seven minutes' mean (May 14th, 1906). Names asked for can't be given, etc., etc. All this mass of diluting material, which can't be reproduced in abridgment, has its inevitable dramatic effect; and if one tends to hate the whole phenomenon anyhow (as I confess that I myself sometimes do) one's judicial verdict inclines accordingly" (pp. 115, 116).

On the other hand, we find such passages as the following:

"Nevertheless, I have to confess also that the more familiar I have become with the records, the less *relative significance* for my mind has all this diluting material tended to assume. The active cause of the communications is on any hypothesis a will of some kind, be it the will of R.H.'s spirit, of lower supernatural intelligences, or of Mrs. Piper's subliminal; and although some of the rubbish may be deliberately willed (certain hesitations, mis-spellings, etc., in the hope that the sitter may give a clue, or certain repetitions, in order to gain time), yet the major part of it is suggestive of something quite different—as if a will were there, but a will to say something which the machinery fails to bring through. Dramatically, most of this 'bosh' is more suggestive to me of dreaminess and mind-wandering than it is of humbug. Why should a 'will to deceive' prefer to give incorrect names so often, if it can give the true ones to which the incorrect ones so frequently approximate as to suggest that they are meant? True names impress the sitter vastly more. Why should it so multiply false 'passwords' ('Zeivorn,' for example, above, p. 86) and stick to them? It looks to me more like aiming at something definite, and failing of the goal. Sometimes the control gives a message to a distant person quite suddenly, as if for some reason a resistance momentarily gave way and let pass a definite desire to give such a message. . . . That a 'will to personate' is a factor in the Piper phenomenon, I fully believe, and I believe with unshakeable firmness that this will is able to draw on supernatural sources of information. It can 'tap,' possibly the sitter's memories, possibly those of distant human beings, possibly some cosmic reservoir in which the memories of earth are stored, whether in the shape of 'spirits' or not. If this were the only will concerned in the performance, the phenomenon would be humbug pure and simple, and the minds tapped telepathically in it would play an entirely passive rôle—that is, the telepathic data would be fished by the personating will, not

forced upon it by desires to communicate, acting externally to itself (vol. xxiii., pp. 116, 117).

Prof. James asks why incorrect names are given so often. The obvious explanation, to my mind, is that someone's memory is unreliable. Now if we assume that the trance-personality is trying to impress the sitters by recalling evidential and intimate associations with the deceased, it is a significant fact that those statements volunteered by the control, which we are sure were known to Mrs. Piper, were nearly always accurate, while the answers to test-questions or statements of facts, which we are not certain were known to Mrs. Piper, were nearly always inaccurate or wholly wrong. Thus a hint of some joke between Dr. Hodgson and Miss Bancroft about her watch may well have been stored in the memory of the trance-personality, who, when the time came to use it, might easily have failed to remember if it was Dr. Hodgson's watch or Miss Bancroft's that the joke was about. But the best example of an inaccurate statement suggesting an attempt of the trance-intelligence to recall an imperfect memory, is, perhaps, given by the "Huldah-Densmore Incident."

As I have said, Dr. Hodgson was refused by a Miss Densmore, whose Christian names were Ella Hannah. Now, in a sitting with Prof. Newbold on January 27th, 1906, the R.H. control referred to his proposal of marriage to Miss Densmore, whose Christian name he first admitted, and then denied was "Jessie" (p. 23). Again, at a sitting on May 2nd, 1906, the Piper-Hodgson control, in a message to Mr. Piddington about some correspondence with this Miss Densmore gave her name as "Huldah" (p. 20). Next, at a sitting on May 29th, 1906, the control, asked if Huldah was one of the three Misses Densmore named Mary, Jenny and Ella respectively, replied that she was "Ella"; but on June 5th this statement was altered, and Miss Huldah Densmore was then said to be one of the other sisters and not Ella, the control adding, "I know what I am talking about" (p. 21). Finally, on October 24th, 1906, when Prof. James asked the control why he had called the lady Huldah when her name was Hannah, the lame reply was given, "I used that name instead of the right Christian name (he here gives the latter correctly) to avoid compromising—it was a very delicate matter, and caused me great disappointment" (vol. xxiii., p. 24).

(3) *The sitters, almost without exception, were continually giving material assistance to the trance-intelligence.* It is important to lay stress on this tendency—which would also be a grave defect in any serious research in experimental psychology—from the fact that the most convincing thing which apparently can be said about the R.H. control is that he gave such a striking impression of reality to the sitters.

We have seen how, in the earlier sittings recorded in the sixth volume, the attempt to keep Mrs. Piper in ignorance of the sitter's name was far from being always successful; and though I believe greater success attended Dr. Hodgson's efforts in this direction at the sittings he arranged in America after 1890, yet I am not

satisfied that the statement that the sitter was introduced anonymously, so that Mrs. Piper could not possibly know who it was, can be relied upon absolutely. But here, in these sittings with the R.H. control, no attempt at anonymity seems to have been possible, and Mrs. Piper apparently knew a great deal about most of her sitters. This fact it is important to bear in mind.

The next point to consider is whether Mrs. Piper's trance-personality would have had any difficulty in simulating the mannerisms and expressions—such as, "By Jingo!"—characteristic of Dr. Hodgson after her close association with him for so many years; and Prof. James admits that they soon got stereotyped.

"Whatever they may have been at the outset, they soon fall into what may be called the trance-memory's 'stock,' and are then repeated automatically. Hodgson quickly acquired a uniform mode of announcing himself: 'Well, well, well! I am Hodgson. Delighted to see you. How is everything? First rate? I'm in the witness-box at last,' etc., with almost no variety" (vol. xxiii., p. 37).

Thus Hodgson's buoyancy and exuberance were indicated by the reiteration of "Well!" seven times at the commencement of a sitting with Prof. James on May 21st, 1906 (p. 80); and the use of a word like "skedaddle," at the end of this sitting (p. 97), undoubtedly was intended to give the sitter the same impression.

There is one particular instance of the use of a curious word which throws, to my mind, considerable light on the medium's part in the personation of the R.H. control. It occurred in a sitting with Prof. W. R. Newbold on July 3rd, 1906.

The record runs as follows: *R.H.*: "I am Hodgson." *W.R.N.*: "Hallo, Dick!" *R.H.*: "I am glad to meet you, Billy, old chap! How are you? First-rate?" *W.R.N.*: "Yes I am, Dick!" *R.H.*: "Capital Good So am I. I come to assure you of my continued existence. Do you remember what I said to you the last time I left you after our experiment with that young man? I said hysteria was the cause of his trances." *W.R.N.*: "Exactly, yes." *R.H.*: "He could not kadoodle me." *W.R.N.*: "That is a new word to me." *R.H.*: "I made that up—ask Judah." (Mr. Judah writes of his sitting of March 27th or 28th: "I tried to get R.H. to repeat a word which he had used in one of our long conversations. It was 'kadoodle'—I think he may have coined it for the occasion. He could not, or at least did not, give it."—As this attempt was during a trance, the reference to Mr. Judah in Newbold's sitting has no evidential bearing.—W.J.) "Tell me about your wife—is she well?" *W.R.N.*: "Yes, better than for these many years." *R.H.*: "Capital! Glad to hear it. Remember me to her" (p. 70).

Here we see that a previous sitter, Mr. Judah, had tried without success to obtain from the R.H. control a characteristic word which would have been of real evidential value. But though the trance-intelligence did not know or remember the word at that time, it is clear that the word was retained in the memory for subsequent use in impersonating Dr. Hodgson's spirit. Now,

seeing that the evidence for the excellence of the R.H. control's portrayal of Dr. Hodgson rests on nothing better than the use of such expressions as " kadoodle," I have no hesitation in believing that Mrs. Piper's subliminal would be equal to the task of taking the part of Dr. Hodgson's spirit. And there are several subsidiary considerations showing that the performance was not a difficult one.

First: as Prof. James' words have already indicated, the confusions and defects were charged to the imperfect conditions, while the successes were credited to the genuineness of the communicating spirit.

Secondly: the most successful evidential statements were full of ambiguities, leaving plenty of room for the sitter to interpret the result favourably. Thus, perhaps the best success occurred at a sitting with Prof. James on May 21st, 1906, in which the question was put, " Do you recall any incidents about your playing with the children in the Adirondacks at the Putnam camp ? "

The record then runs as follows: *R.H.:* " Do you remember,—what is that name, Elizabeth Putnam ? She came in, and I was sitting in a chair before the fire reading, and she came in and put her hands, crept up behind me, put her hands over my eyes, and said, ' Who is it ? ' And do you remember what my answer was ? " *W.J.:* " Let me see if *you* remember it as I do." *R.H.:* " I said, ' Well, it feels like Elizabeth Putnam, but it sounds like—— ' " *W.J.:* " I know who you mean." [R.H. quite startled me here because what he said reminded me of an incident which I well remembered. One day at breakfast little Martha Putnam (as I recall the fact) had climbed on Hodgson's back, sitting on his shoulders, and clasped her hands over his eyes, saying, ' Who am I ? ' To which R.H. laughing, had responded: ' It sounds like Martha, but it feels like Henry Bowditch '—the said H.B. weighing nearly 200 lbs. I find that no one but myself, of those who probably were present, remembers this incident.—W.J.] *R.H.:* " Do you realize how difficult that is ? " *W.J.:* " It is, evidently; yet you were just on the point of saying it. Is it a man or woman ? " *R.H.:* " A man." *W.J.:* " Have you any message for that man now ? " *R.H.:* " Dr.—not Putnam—Dr. Bowditch ! " *W.J.:* " That is it, Bowditch." *R.H.:* " Sounds like Dr. Bowditch ? " *W.J.:* " It was not Elizabeth Putnam, but it was Charlie Putnam's daughter." *R.H.:* " Charlie Putnam, yes. Now, do you remember that ? " *W.J.:* " But what is the name of Charles Putnam's daughter ? *R.H.:* " Of whom ? Annie ? Oh, she is the youngest. She is the young lady. And there was a Mary—Mamie." (False names.—W.J.) *W.J.:* " But you must remember Charles Putnam's daughter's name ! " *R.H.:* " I have got it now in my mind. I could not think of it at first. Well, it has gone from me at the moment. Never mind. That is less important than the thing itself " (vol. xxiii., p. 91, 92).

Here we cannot really be certain that the incident had not been mentioned to Mrs. Piper, and the fact that the control only got Prof. Bowditch's name with help and could not, even with help, get Miss Putnam's Christian name, recalls the " Huldah-Densmore Incident," and suggests the groping after a forgotten memory on the part of the trance-personality.

Thirdly: the voice sittings are productive of ambiguities, as I have already pointed out, and the written record could be read by the sitter sometimes only with the greatest difficulty. This was noticeably the case in the sittings of Dr. Bayley (p. 52) and Dr. Putman (p. 99). Even those who found less difficulty in reading the writing sometimes made mistakes of which the control took advantage (*see* pp. 56, 63-67).

Fourthly: the record was not always accurate; and occasionally veridical statements were supposed to have been made, which were probably answers to questions (omitted in the record) that suggested the answer. Further, the sitters sometimes showed that their recollections were far from reliable, and assented to a statement as veridical and recalling a memory which afterwards they had to admit was non-existent (*see* pp. 74, 84).

Fifthly: the sitters were often put off by the lamest excuses, and did not insist on a practical verification of what the control professed to have done. Thus the R.H. control professed to have knocked Miss Bancroft's arm on one occasion, when she was asleep, but refused to knock her arm again during the sitting.

The record runs as follows: *Miss B.:* "I have seen you several times in dreams." *R.H.:* "Remember my knock?" *Miss B.:* "When did you knock?" *R.H.:* "You were sleeping." *Miss B.:* "I remember twice when I thought some one knocked my arm." *R.H.:* "But I woke you; I certainly did." (Correct.) *Miss B.:* "Can't you do me a favour by knocking now?" *R.H.:* "Not while I keep on speaking. You wish me to knock your arm now, eh? I cannot do so and keep on speaking. Do you remember the evening I told you about my sister Ellen's boy?" *Miss B.:* "I do not recall it" (vol. xxiii., pp. 57, 58).

In spite of all these aids to successful personation of the deceased friends of sitters, Prof. James has to admit that "the reality-coefficient, as Prof. Baldwin calls it, has generally been absent from my mind when dealing with the Piper controls or reading reports of their communications" (p. 18); although the particular incident in connection with which he makes this admission was one of which he says, "at a certain moment it gave me a little thrill, as if I might be really talking with my old friend." But this "Nigger-Talk Case" turned out to be a typically ambiguous case as a test of identity. Not only had the reference to nigger-talk come up at two previous sittings with Mrs. Piper on February 13th, 1901, and February 4th, 1902—(when a control purporting to be the spirit of Frederic Myers said to Dr. Hodgson, the sitter, "Do you remember about your laughing with me once and your saying that doubtless you would some time be coming back and talking nigger-talk" (p. 19))—but also the R.H. control failed to answer further questions about this nigger-talk, (answers to which might really have been evidential,) at a later sitting with Prof. James.

The record runs: *W. J.*: "I'll try to glorify you as much as I can!" *R. H.*: "Oh, I don't care about that. I would like to have the truth known, and I would like to have you work up these statements as proof that I am not annihilated." *W. J.*: "Precisely so. Well, R.H., you think over that 'nigger-minstrel' talk (compare p. 18). If you get the whole conversation in which that nigger-minstrel talk was mentioned by me, it would be very good proof that it is you talking to me." (He failed to get it.—W. J.) *R. H.*: "Well, I shall do it. I want you to understand one thing, that in the act of communicating it is like trying to give a conversation over the telephone, that the things that you want to say the most slip from you, but when you have ceased to talk they all come back to you. You can understand that." *W. J.*: "I understand that they come back." *R. H.*: "But I shall give that out to some one here, you may be sure, and I hope to see you —this is only the beginning, and I shall be clearer from time to time, but the excitement of seeing you has been very beautiful to me" (vol. xxiii., pp. 95, 96).

In addition to the five aids I have already discussed, there is another which is perhaps the most important of all, as it is the key to the solution of a problem which Sir Oliver Lodge himself realises is a difficulty though he cannot explain it. This aid is the extent to which the sitters kept on telling the trance-intelligence whether it was successful or no in its personation of Dr. Hodgson. In illustration of this tendency, two examples must suffice, though I might quote many more, such as the occasion when Dr. Bayley said "Dick, that was splendid!" *à propos* of the control mentioning the "Popsey Wopsey" song.

(*a*.) At a sitting on July 3rd, 1906, with Prof. W. R. Newbold, the following conversation took place: *W. R. N.*: "Yes, Dick, you are very easy and clear to understand." *R. H.*: "I am glad to hear it. I am trying my level best to give you facts." *W. R. N.*: "Very good." *R. H.*: "I said my pipe and my work would not be given up even for a wife. Oh, how you have helped me, Billy. Yes, in clearing my mind wonderfully." (I omit here a few sentences from R.H. in which he credits me with a remark I have often made to him, seldom to others.—Important veridically.—N.) *W. R. N.*: "Dick, I have told you that twenty times." *R. H.*: "You have certainly; but, Billy, I used to say it was the most important thing in the world I believed. (Refers next to psychical research, and in particular to the Piper case.) You said you could not understand why so many mistakes were made, and I talked you blind trying to explain my ideas of it." *W. R. N.*: "Dick, this sounds like your own self. Just the way you used to talk to me." *R. H.*: "Well, if I am not Hodgson, he never lived." *W. R. N.*: "But you are so clear" (pp. 72, 73) . . . . and at a later stage of the sitting, —*W. R. N.*: "No, Dick; you are thinking of some one else. I never told you that." *R. H.*: "Yes, you did in the case of the man I am talking of, who pretended to give manifestations, and you were right in your judgment." *W. R. N.*: "Yes! I think I did say it in that case." *R. H.*: "While in other cases you were open and clear to my explanations—and agreed with me, especially regarding G.P." *W. R. N.* "Right! First rate! That is all very characteristic" (p. 74).

(*b*.) At a sitting on May 21st, 1906, Prof. James said, "I wish that what you say could grow more continuous. That would convince me. You are very much like your old self, but you are curiously fragmentary" (vol. xxiii., p. 94).

Now, the problem which has difficulties for Sir Oliver Lodge is how to account for the fact that, while the controls purporting to be the spirits of Edmund Gurney and Frederic Myers have been characterised by a " reality-coefficient " at sittings in England, but not in America, the R.H. control has been a relative failure at sittings in England compared with the impression he produced on his American sitters, as described in Prof. James' report.

Sir Oliver Lodge says, " One curious circumstance I feel constrained to mention—though it will seem absurd—and that is that the controls seem to do best in their own country. For instance, long ago, before any of us on this side of the Atlantic had seen Mrs. Piper, a control calling itself Gurney sent messages through that medium while she was still in America; which messages, when recorded on this side, were thought feeble and unworthy, so that the control was spoken of both by Prof. W. James and by those in England as ' the pseudo-Gurney.' When, however, Mrs. Piper came over here, the ' Gurney ' messages became better and could be described as quite fairly life-like. Conversely, the Hodgson control, which seemed rather brilliant and active over there, when it appeared on this side, did not sustain that character to the full extent. It was robust and lively, and in manner like Hodgson, but it was not so successful in furnishing tests or in recognising old friends. Again, the Myers control, which had seemed rather weak over there, on this side gained strength and vivacity, and gave some admirable tests.

" The fact of the difference here suggested may be doubted, and I do not dogmatise about it, but that is my impression ; and I see that something similar has already struck Mr. Piddington, and is remarked upon by him at the beginning of his Introduction. I have no explanation to offer, beyond the obvious suggestion that familiar and friendly surroundings—greater intimacy of friends and relations in the proximate neighbourhood—all make for strength and reality, and give assistance to the impersonation. This, indeed, is a conceivable possibility on any hypothesis, whether the control is merely a personation by Mrs. Piper's subliminal consciousness, or is a telepathic influence from living persons acting upon it, or whether it is really some surviving influence of the departed intelligence who is the ostensible communicator " (vol. xxiii., p. 138).

The easiest explanation of this fact, and one I find no difficulty in holding, is that Mrs. Piper's personation of various spirits partly depends for its success on the assistance she gets from her sitters, and this again depends on the intimacy which existed between the sitters and the deceased. Thus, while Hodgson's most intimate friends during the last fifteen years of his life were made chiefly in America, those of Edmund Gurney and Myers were undoubtedly in England.

I have now completed my review of the Piper-Hodgson control, and hope that I have succeeded in harmonising the earlier and later Piper phenomena. On the whole, I venture to think that the latter have served the purpose of verifying the conclusions which I have already drawn from the former.

APPENDIX R

Experiments in Thought-Transference

Of all psychic phenomena those of thought-transference are the only ones which can be tested under laboratory conditions. And the experiments quoted as proving that thought-transference "is established beyond the possibility of challenge to those who will really examine the evidence" [1] have professedly been done with the same precautions as are taken in a serious scientific research. Consequently, we may reasonably expect to find that the experimenters have had the training requisite for detecting the fallacies which underlie this type of research.

The fallacies in question, if they are to be exposed, require in the experimenters at least a knowledge of conjuring, some training in the methods of experimental psychology, and previous experience in conducting a serious scientific research. A knowledge of conjuring is necessary to guard against the deceptions of collusion and illusion. Training in the methods of experimental psychology is necessary, because fallacies introduced by the limitations and vagaries of the senses are a feature of all psychological research. And, after all, experiments in telepathy are really a branch of experimental psychology, although at present no recognition is taken of it in any serious text-book of psychology, because trained psychologists realise that the difficulty of excluding fallacies in such experiments is so enormous that no reliable results have up to now been obtained. Lastly, the necessity for some previous experience in conducting a serious scientific research is obvious.

Now, what do we find? On the one hand, none of those, whose experiments are quoted as proving the existence of thought-transference, such as Barrett, Gurney, Myers, Podmore and Sidgwick, were trained in experimental psychology; hardly one can be called a conjurer; and only a few have ever been engaged in scientific research. On the other hand, we find them employing as "agent" or "percipient" in their experiments persons, who probably possessed some knowledge of conjuring and whose *bona fides* is questionable.

Almost the first experiments in thought-transference, which were published by the S.P.R., were done by Messrs. Gurney and Myers in 1882-1883. They employed as "agent" a Mr. Douglas Blackburn and as "percipient" a Mr. G. A. Smith, two young men who were giving (as private unpaid demonstrators) exhibitions of thought-reading and mesmerism, etc., in Brighton, at

[1] Prof. Barrett in the *Daily News*, September 6th, 1911.

the time. These thirty-one experiments—in particular one in which Mr. Smith's head was enveloped in a blanket (see the experiment illustrated by Fig. 22 in the third report on thought-transference by Messrs. Gurney, Myers, Podmore and Prof. Barrett, *Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. i.)—were considered to establish satisfactorily a case for telepathy. But in the *Daily News* for September 1st, 1911, close on thirty years afterwards, Mr. Blackburn published a confession, to the effect that Smith and he were confederates, and that their successes were due to the use of codes and tricks combined with lucky chance-hits. This assertion was flatly contradicted by Mr. Smith three days later; but, whether Mr. Blackburn's statement was true or false, Mr. Smith had a very strong motive for denial, as he had acted as secretary to both Mr. Gurney and Mr. Myers. At any rate, Mr. Blackburn, while apologising for having put Mr. Smith (whom he thought was dead) into such an awkward position, adhered to his story, and amplified it with details as to how certain tricks, including the one when Mr. Smith's head was enveloped in a blanket, were carried out (*The Daily News*, September 5th, 1911). To these statements also Mr. Smith gave a categorical denial (*The Daily News*, September 6th, 1911).

Now, the important point about this controversy is that there can be no doubt that either Mr. Blackburn's or Mr. Smith's regard for truth is not of the strongest. And as both were employed in these experiments, this fact alone vitiates to some extent their value. Also Mr. Smith does not deny that he had been engaged with Mr. Blackburn as his partner in giving thought-transference exhibitions, the description of which in *Light* (August 26th, 1882) led—after some correspondence with the S.P.R.—to their investigation by Messrs. Myers and Gurney.

Whatever be the truth in the matter [1] the moral is plain: how beset with difficulties is the path of the investigator working with more or less irresponsible agents, who claim, or are supposed to possess, telepathic sensitiveness, especially if they have given public entertainments in thought-transference or mesmerism.

I should be very sorry to assert that Mr. Smith's honesty cannot be relied upon; but, nevertheless, it is unfortunate that, in the more famous and important experiments carried out at Brighton in 1889-1891, Prof. Sidgwick so largely made use of his agency and hypnotic powers, instead of calling in the assistance of a scientifically trained and medically qualified hypnotist such as Dr. Bramwell. (Incidentally I may mention that this recognised authority on hypnotism has before now put his powers at the service of the S.P.R., so that he cannot be accused of bias, when

[1] Readers really interested in the reliability of the evidence for telepathy should look up the articles in the *Daily News* during the first week of September, 1911.

he states in his book that he has never seen any convincing evidence for thought-transference.)

One of the chief points of contradiction between Mr. Smith and Mr. Blackburn was the possibility of "bamboozling" Messrs. Gurney and Myers. Mr. Blackburn said :—

"I say boldly that Messrs. Myers and Gurney were too anxious to get corroboration of their theories to hold the balance impartially. Again and again they gave the benefit of the doubt to experiments that were failures. They allowed us to impose our own conditions, accepted without demur our explanations of failure, and, in short, exhibited a complaisance and confidence which, however complimentary to us, was scarcely consonant with a strict investigation on behalf of the public.

"That this same slackness characterised their investigations with other sensitives I am satisfied, for I witnessed many, and the published reports confirmed the suspicion. It is also worthy of note that other sensitives broke down or showed weakness on exactly the same points that Smith and I failed—namely, in visualising an article difficult to describe in words signalled by a code. A regular figure or familiar object was nearly always seen by the percipient, but, when a splotch of ink, or a grotesque irregular figure had to be transferred from one brain to the other, the result was always failure. We, owing to a very ingenious diagram code, got nearer than anybody, but our limitations were great." (*Daily News*, September. 1, 1911.)

and again :—

"The reports of those trained and conscientious observers, Messrs. Myers and Gurney, contain many absolute inaccuracies. For example, in describing one of my 'experiments,' they say emphatically, 'In no case did B. touch S., even in the slightest manner.' I touched him eight times, that being the only way in which our code was then worked." (*Daily News*, September 1st, 1911.)

whereas Mr. Smith maintained :—

"that Mr. Blackburn's story is a tissue of errors from beginning to end. In the first place, I most emphatically deny that I ever in any degree, in any way, when working thirty years ago with Mr. Blackburn, attempted to bamboozle Messrs. Myers, Gurney, and Podmore. Had such a thing been possible, I had too much admiration and respect for them, and too much respect for myself, to try. These gentlemen, long before they met us, had spent years in investigating psychic phenomena, and were aware of every device and dodge for making sham phenomena; they were on the watch not only for premeditated trickery, but for unconscious trickery as well. You could not deceive them, and the quack mediums hated them in consequence."

"They were the best trained and best qualified observers in London, and it makes my blood boil to see them held up to ridicule. Were it not for the teaching of Myers and Gurney on the unreliability of human evidence, Mr. Blackburn could not say what he has said. He is merely repeating what they taught him. The finest expositions of such unreliability are by Myers and Gurney. They were so highly equipped for this work that the best trick mediums could never do the tricks in their presence. I was most closely associated with both men, being private secretary to each in turn, and speak the things I know." (*Daily News*, September 4th, 1911.)

As I have already pointed out, the equipment of none of the founders of the S.P.R. for doing psychical research can be regarded

as satisfactory. And we know, on the authority of Mr. F. W. Myers (*see* his essay on Edmund Gurney in " Fragments of Prose and Poetry "), that the S.P.R. was founded in order to establish the existence of telepathy. Therefore it is fair to consider that these early members of the S.P.R. were biassed in favour of telepathy, and that this bias would certainly tend to produce such defects of observation as are mentioned by Mr. Blackburn. It is true that probably Messrs. Gurney, Myers, Barrett and Sidgwick were well aware of the possibilities and dangers of collusion, deception, and malobservation. But after the way in which Eusapia (apparently) hoodwinked Prof. Richet, Sir O. Lodge, and Mr. Myers at the Île Roupard, as already described, there is nothing essentially improbable about Mr. Blackburn's statement that there was little difficulty in deceiving Messrs. Gurney and Myers.

If this supposition still appears incredible to my readers in view of the culture and intelligence of the observers, I have only to refer to the chapter on " slate-writing " in the second volume of Podmore's " Modern Spiritualism," where the author describes how he watched an amateur conjurer remove a slate, under cover of a duster, from beneath his brother's nose, and put it back by the same device after writing a message on it, without his brother ever being aware that the slate had been moved, although he knew beforehand the object of the trick. (*See* Appendix E.)



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